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**A case study of the experiences of small group
work for newly arrived EAL pupils in a
secondary school: perceptions of teachers,
teaching assistants and pupils.**

by

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**A dissertation presented as partial fulfilment for the award of
Doctor of Education**

Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick

March 2015

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ELL	English Language Learner
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMPSU	Ethnic Minority and Pupil Support Unit
ESL	English as a Second Language
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
KS	Key Stage
LA	Local Authority
L1	First Language
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
NAEP	Newly Arrived EAL Pupil
NALDIC	National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum
NC	National Curriculum
NQTs	Newly Qualified Teachers
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TA	Teaching Assistant

TDA	Teacher Development Agency
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am fortunate to have had the unfailing support of several people during my period of study. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Jane Medwell for her advice, guidance and encouragement. I am also grateful for the words of encouragement that my mother, family members and friends extended along the way. To my husband, Wale, thank you for your love and support. To Tanyasha, thanks for the professional advice and encouragement.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other University.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of teachers, teaching assistants and pupils about small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils. This was a case study of one secondary school with a high intake of newly arrived EAL pupils. At the time, there were several whole school initiatives to address government directives to improve teaching and learning across the curriculum. Two parallel questionnaires were administered to teachers and teaching assistants. 19 teachers and 3 teaching assistants completed the questionnaires. 10 teachers and 2 teaching assistants responded to a request to be interviewed and 13 pupils participated in two focus group discussions. The findings demonstrate that teachers hold positive perceptions about the inclusion of newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons but are concerned about issues such as the impact on monolingual and advanced bilingual learners, assessment, language and/or content teaching and professional development opportunities for staff. To varying degrees, teachers perceive that small group interaction can support pupils but there are dependent factors. Teaching assistants perceive that small group interaction is beneficial but have highlighted areas for consideration and development. The pupils share mainly positive views about their involvement in small group work and at the same time, identify challenges that they encounter as they try to work with their peers. This study provides an insight into the experiences of newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons in one school and highlighted areas of concern worth investigating in EAL teaching and learning in mainstream classrooms.

Key Words: newly arrived EAL pupils, small group work, perceptions, interaction.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Interaction is sharing ideas. It is best to work in a team to bounce your ideas off. Team work is stronger with the right interaction.”
(Year 8 pupil from Romania)

1.1 Introduction to Chapter

This chapter presents an overview of the research background and the issues which make such an exploration possible and worthwhile. The researcher’s motivation and professional context are also presented.

1.2 Introduction

The number of pupils identified as having English as an additional language (EAL) has been steadily increasing over the years and with this educators continue to adapt, change and experiment with teaching styles and strategies to enable pupils to access new knowledge and to develop existing competencies while learning English (Arnot et al., 2014; Wallace, 2014). For many mainstream teachers, it is an exciting and challenging period as they discover ways of learning with pupils, finding out what suits them, the difficulties they face and the opportunities gained from sharing and interacting in classroom activities.

Newly arrived EAL pupils (NAEP) have an urgent need to acquire English and it is vital to have in place appropriate opportunities for language acquisition so that they can engage and make both academic and social progress. The primary aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of pupils, teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) about the experiences of

NAEP during small group work. This will be done by investigating the perceptions of staff and pupils in one school.

1.3 Clarification of Terms

In this section, I will define the terminology used in this research when referring to the language/s spoken by pupils. The terms which will be defined are first language (L1), EAL, English language learners (ELLs) and English as a second language (ESL).

1.3.1 First language (L1)

For this research, L1 refers to the language that the child first learnt in the home setting and the main language spoken by the child in the home and community (Ortega, 2009; Gass and Selinker, 2008).

1.3.2 English as an additional language (EAL)

In the UK, EAL refers to the teaching and learning of English through the content of the curriculum to pupils whose first language is not English (Mallows, 2012; Haslam et al., 2005). EAL is used in official publications to emphasize that learning English is a positive addition to the language/s that a pupil already uses (Arnot, et al., 2014; Haslam, et al., 2005; Leung, 2001). From my point of view, EAL means that language learning should be a part of or intertwined with the whole school curriculum and as the focus of this research concerns pupils learning EAL, it is used throughout.

1.3.3 English Language Learners (ELLs)

ELLs describes pupils who speak a language other than English and are in the process of acquiring English and is mainly used in the US (Xu 2010;

Garcia, et al., 2008). In this research, ELLs is used when referring to studies conducted in the US which support the focus of this present research.

1.3.4 English as a Second Language (ESL)

In the 1980s, ESL was used in the UK to refer to pupils learning English in addition to the languages they already knew (Franson, 1999). In the literature review of this research, ESL is used in recounting the background to the teaching and learning of English to school-aged pupils and to what is now EAL.

1.4 Research Context

1.4.1 Historical background to EAL in the UK

In this research, it is important to understand how the present situation has arisen. During the 1960s, the huge number of non-English speaking immigrant pupils entering UK schools meant that there was a demand to meet the English language needs of these pupils (Costley, 2014; Franson, 1999). Bourne (1989, p. 4) pointed out that it was only during the 1960s that the “language needs of pupils speaking languages other than English became an issue”.

English language teaching therefore became a priority and non-English speaking pupils were often placed in language centres, separate from their English-speaking peers where they were taught English by teachers mainly trained in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy and which was referred to as ESL (Franson, 1999).

However, during the 1970s, it was found that language centres were not always able to provide for the social and cultural integration of bilingual pupils, their language needs plus the linguistic demands of different curriculum areas (Costley, 2014; Edwards and Redfern, 1992; CRE., 1986).

1.4.1.1 The 1980s

As EAL learners progressed through the curriculum, the need for the continual development of their academic English was evident. During the 1980s, the focus expanded and the ESL/EAL teacher was called upon to

provide advice on issues such as multiculturalism, anti-racism and second language acquisition (SLA) while supporting English language development across the curriculum (Franson, 1999). Changes in second language pedagogical practice also influenced the educational provision for EAL learners and the perception of language as a system of expressing meaning and language as communication was dominant and communicative language teaching had a significant impact on the teaching of ESL (Franson, 1999; Spada and Lightbown, 2009).

In communicative language teaching, the learner should have the opportunity to participate in meaningful interactive tasks and should be responding to genuine communicative needs (Gass and Selinker, 2008). Also, bilingual immersion programmes in Canada contributed to the assumption that EAL learners would benefit more from a communicative approach (Franson, 1999). A positive move at this time was the use of the term bilingual learners to replace second language learners (Reid, 1988). This name change signalled an acknowledgement of the fact that this group of learners had abilities and skills in other languages.

1.4.1.2 The Swann Report

In 1985 and under the policy of inclusive education, the publication of the Swann Report led to pupils with EAL being taught in mainstream classes (Costley, 2014; Swann, 1985). In theory, the aim was that EAL pupils would progress in line with their same age peers in a mainstream academic

setting. The Swann Report gave prominence to the linguistic and language development of all pupils which was to happen in mainstream classrooms (Swann, 1985).

According to Leung (2007), this also meant that EAL pupils would be judged and assessed against the same standards of the National Curriculum (NC) as their monolingual English-speaking peers. The NC is “spirally based” and learners are expected to build upon the skills and knowledge from previous years which means that EAL learners are at a disadvantage (Costley, 2014; Sood and Mistry, 2011, p. 208).

1.4.1.3 1990s-2000s

In the 1990s, collaborative “Partnership Teaching”, based on the premise that the subject teacher and the EAL specialist would work together in mainstream mixed ability classes to plan and to provide for the language and learning needs of EAL pupils became the recommended strategy for teaching EAL pupils (Graf, 2011; Creese, 2000). At the time of writing, this is still widely the case but in some areas EAL provision is varied due to funding cuts (Arnot et.al., 2014; NALDIC, 2011).

The reality in many schools is that there isn’t a designated EAL specialist and where there may be, the rise in pupil numbers means that support is often limited or confined to specific groups of pupils, for example, NAEP with limited English or those preparing to sit examinations (NALDIC, 2011). Current figures suggest that more than a million pupils in UK

schools have a language other than English as their first language (Arnot, et al., 2014; DfE, 2013; NALDIC, 2013).

Many schools are faced with the challenge of ensuring adequate provision for NAEP with limited English and with the task of implementing structures and programmes to fulfil their linguistic and social needs (Arnot et. al., 2014; Costley, 2014; Graf, 2011). As such, provision is varied across the UK and even from school to school within large cities such as Birmingham.

This means that individual schools are forced to make provisions for NAEP based on their unique situations and intake of pupils (NALDIC, 2014). Mainstream classrooms is the accepted context in which we find NAEP and small group work in mainstream classrooms is highlighted as one of the strategies through which pupils can be supported to improve and to develop their language skills.

1.4.2 A broad view of the issue

People moving from country to country because of war, economic opportunities and globalization means that schools in developed societies are confronted with pupils who speak different languages, often languages other than the language of education (Kelly, 2013; Kramsch, 2009; Garcia, 2009). In the educational environment, pupils therefore have to interact with each other, often in a new language and share learning and social spaces.

Schools equally have to adapt to the changing pupil population and teachers are challenged to re-define their roles and how they facilitate learning in a growing context of linguistically and culturally diverse pupils (Gearon et al., 2009; Garcia, 2008). Johnson (2008) posited that learning and using several languages are commonplace in many societies and the need to be able to use and to function in languages other than one's first language is for many of our pupils, a way of life.

Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron (2011) share the view that additional or second language learners in secondary schools are quite diverse in their linguistic and cultural background as well as their level of proficiency in first languages and curriculum content. Nevertheless, they are expected to engage in curriculum subject content across different disciplines and registers.

The UK, Australia, Canada and the US have been noted as the main countries where there has and continues to be a considerable increase in the cultural, racial and linguistic diversity of the pupil population in schools (Gearon et al., 2009). With this, research focused on various pedagogical issues surrounding bilingual and multilingual learners in diverse learning situations have been plentiful (Kaneva, 2012; Stanat et al. 2012; De Angelis, 2011; Gearon et al, 2009; Conteh et al. 2008; Gibbons 2008).

Different research orientations and developments in the area of educational practices in, for example, SLA, bilingual and multilingual education impact on the evolving field of EAL pedagogy (Gearon et al., 2009). Kramsch

(2008) argued the need to review the curricula offered to multilingual pupils. As a teacher of modern foreign languages (MFL), my interest and focus for this research was initially centered on the experiences of EAL pupils in mainstream MFL lessons.

1.4.3 Purpose of the research

Given my interest in the field of EAL and language learning, my professional role developed and expanded to include the teaching of EAL. With this research, I hope to investigate the perceptions of pupils, teachers and TAs about the challenges and opportunities afforded by small group work. The motivation for this research therefore grew out of my professional role as a teacher of MFL and stemmed from a desire to initially increase my knowledge of EAL pupils' experiences in foreign language lessons and subsequently in mainstream lessons.

Anderson (2008), Cummins (2001) and Gearon, et al., (2009) addressed the needs for educators including teachers of compulsory foreign language courses like myself to re-think and re-evaluate curriculum and language teaching practices in order to respond to the diverse pupil population. Gearon, et al., (2009, p.3) commented that there are implications for teachers of compulsory foreign languages as there is a need to "re-evaluate language teaching practices and curriculum in a way that is more responsive to difference."

The need for mainstream subject teachers to be responsible for both the language and academic needs of linguistically and culturally diverse pupils is also stressed (Coelho, 2012; DCSF, 2008; Gibbons, 2009; Cummins, 2001). With the increase in the numbers of pupils learning English while learning subject content, there have been concerns regarding the educational attainment of EAL pupils even though there is little empirical research in this particular area in the UK (Demie, 2013; Demie and Strand, 2005).

Stanat, et al., (2012) and Lindholm-Leary, et al., (2011) also found that in education in Germany and the US respectively, issues such as the achievement gap between native and language minority pupils present a major concern. Christensen and Stanat (2007) reported that the educational attainment of immigrant pupils who are learning the language of instruction is often lower than that of their peers who are fluent users of the language of education.

1.4.4 Research focus

This research will not directly address educational attainment or achievement rather the experiences of EAL pupils in small group work during mainstream lessons in one school. To this end, I have looked at some theoretical strands and concepts in the broad field of SLA, foreign language learning (FLL) and sociocultural theory. An interdisciplinary approach is needed for researching contexts where pupils are learning EAL (Leung, 2009; Gibbons, 2006). According to Leung (2001, p.33),

“Intellectually and pedagogically, EAL draws on areas of research such as applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, ethnography of communication, cognitive and educational psychology and curriculum studies.” (Leung, 2001, p.33)

Some of the literature consulted, for example, Gibbons (2006), Franson (1999) and Bourne (1989) detailing the background of EAL acknowledges the fact that the teaching and learning of EAL has been impacted by the prevailing theories, research findings, changes and development in the fields of foreign and second language teaching and learning. Therefore, I will draw on research and studies in these areas and demonstrate how they link to or can be applied to EAL.

Additionally, I will outline the key terms found in the current literature and show how they relate to the present research. In a review of research on EAL in the UK, Andrews (2009) identified gaps in pedagogic practices in the 11-18 age groups and this research is an attempt to address this gap by exploring the perceptions of teachers, TAs and pupils about small group work between pupils in one secondary school. Coelho (2012) and Wardman (2012) affirmed that the use of small group work should be a main strategy for curriculum and language learning.

1.4.5 The focus on interaction and small group work

Interaction, a key concept in SLA research refers to the exchange of information during face-to-face communication and its role in language learning has been researched from different perspectives, namely, the cognitive interactionist and the sociocultural constructs (Tognini, 2008).

The sociocultural perspective highlights, for example, the social nature of learning, language as a mediational tool and the concept of scaffolding as developed by Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1986).

These ideas provide a context for interaction as a strategy to encourage the language development of EAL learners in the mainstream (Gibbons, 2006). The theoretical context for this research draws on the ideas of Lantolf and Thorne (2006), Mercer and Littleton (2007), Wells and Wells (1992) and Gibbons (2006) which postulate that talk and learning through interaction is vital to learning, language learning and development.

Small group work is considered an appropriate setting for the input and development of language (Coelho, 2012). In a mainstream classroom, working in small groups is an opportunity for pupils to practise English through pupil-pupil interaction, try out new language in a “smaller space” plus develop cooperative and social skills (Gravelle, 2005; Gagné and Parks, 2013). Interaction during small group work is seen to have the potential to provide pupils new to English with a supportive environment in which they can listen to and learn from each other (Gibbons 2009; Bunch, 2009). These ideas will be further explored in the literature review.

1.5 Motivation for this Research

This research investigates the perceptions of pupils, teachers and TAs about the experiences of NAEP during small group work in mainstream lessons. It also aims to identify the challenges and opportunities that pupils face during small group work. Pupils characterized as having EAL could be

recent arrivals or could be from homes and communities where languages other than English are used. In the educational environment, they now have to learn English in addition to languages they already know and use, and they have to use English to access subject content across the curriculum.

This poses challenges as well as opportunities for learners, teachers and the school community who must now meet the needs of each individual EAL learner. At the time of writing, the teaching standards in the UK were changed and standard 5 states that mainstream subject teachers have to “adapt their teaching to meet the strengths and needs of all pupils including those who have EAL” (DfE, 2012, p. 8). This statement of the teaching standards on the surface seems common sense and perhaps just a re-phrasal of what every teacher ought to be doing.

From a personal perspective and as observed in my professional setting, it is challenging trying to change the way some teachers organize and plan their teaching and learning activities to reflect the language demands of their particular curriculum subject. NAEP are often viewed as being the responsibility of the TAs with mainstream teachers underestimating the need to make language teaching an explicit part of their subject teaching.

This research is deeply influenced by and embedded in my everyday work. The setting of my professional practice has seen a marked increase in the number of NAEP and it is important that the research itself addresses the needs of the pupils in the setting, one that constantly has to adapt to changes that suit government initiatives and targets. The rapid transformation of the

pupil population in this school which is the context for this study has influenced the decisions and choices made regarding the orientation and purpose of this research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Interaction is very important because you enjoy yourself and you learn with your mates and groups. You will enjoy your lesson. You work with them.” (Year 7 pupil from Somalia)

2.1 Introduction to Chapter

In this Chapter, I will discuss small group work, interaction and learning and its relation to EAL. These areas will be discussed because the focus of this research is the perceptions of teachers, TAs and pupils about small group work in mainstream lessons and as pupils are expected to collaborate, interaction plays a part during small group work.

Pupils identified as having EAL in mainstream secondary schools are learning an additional language which accounts for the link to SLA, aspects of which will also be discussed. The findings of studies on small group work and interaction and the perception of teachers, pupils and TAs about the role of small group work that are relevant to this research will then be examined. To facilitate and order this review, I have divided this chapter into 4 parts. Part 1 begins by looking at the pupils who are the focus of the research.

2.2 Literature Review: Part 1

This section describes the pupils that are the focus of this research and begins to explain the educational context in which they are included.

2.2.1 Pupils Learning EAL

Pupils learning EAL come from a range of linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Some are newly arrived in the country whereas others have been settled for a while and are fluent to varying degrees in English. Additionally, some might have had periods of interrupted schooling or no previous formal schooling (Graf, 2011; DCSF, 2007b).

Furthermore, some pupils may have developed good oracy and literacy skills in their first and another language; may attend community language or complementary schools where they learn another language, usually related to their ethnic and cultural background; have had experience with written English but lack oral skills; experience or have experienced racism, emotional or psychological stress, mental or physical health (NALDIC, 2010). Since EAL learners are a diverse group, any definition is likely to “cross over language, ethnicity, social class and the reasons for migration” (Wallace, 2014, p. 3).

2.2.1.1 Newly arrived EAL pupils (NAEP)

In the UK, the term advanced bilingual learners is used to distinguish pupils who have some proficiency in English and may need support in specific skills or areas of the curriculum (DCSF, 2007b). This is different from those pupils who have little or no English. In this research, I will

concentrate on NAEP who have little or no English as I contend that their needs are particularly problematic due to their limited or lack of English and that their presence in the mainstream classroom poses a greater challenge for teachers in the school where this research was undertaken. NAEP in this research are pupils in the early stages of learning English and learning in English in an academic setting in secondary schools (Pim, 2012; DfE, 2007b). I will now look at the policy of mainstreaming.

2.2.2 Mainstreaming and Inclusion

Mainstreaming refers to the policy of placing all pupils in regular subject classes across the curriculum with language support provided by specialist language teachers working alongside subject teachers (Creese, 2002). As stated by Vazquez (2006, p.27), in England, mainstreaming is the “placing of EAL learners directly into regular mainstream classes according to their age.” This position stems from the desire to include every pupil in mainstream classrooms to avoid any form of perceived discrimination (Wardman, 2012).

So, mainstreaming would fulfil “ideological and pedagogical” needs as Franson (1999, p.59) explained. The responsibility of fulfilling every aspect of the EAL learner’s needs lies with each subject teacher and the organization and planning of small groups within mainstream lessons is one of the ways in which teachers attempt to accomplish this part of their practice (Gravelle, 2005). Mainstreaming and the inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons do not only refer to physical inclusion but rather inclusion in every aspect of the lesson (Chen, 2007; Gravelle, 2005).

However, Cameron (2002) has commented that mainstreaming which also draws on the comprehensible input theory in language acquisition has been criticized by applied linguists for failing to provide sufficient attention to aspects such as language production and a focus on form. The comprehensible input theory postulates that the most important source of language learning comes from the language to which learners are exposed and have to process for meaning (Ortega, 2009). As Cameron argues though, mainstreaming may not always ensure a focus on language (Cameron, 2002).

2.2.3 Mainstreaming in practice

The welcoming of EAL pupils in a school community such as the one where this research is placed has the potential to transform the culture, ethos and way of life of the school. Such transformation translates into a change in how mainstream teachers approach their planning and imparting of subject knowledge and even physical learning spaces (Pim, 2012; Graf, 2011). The need to fully empower teachers and other professionals to meet the needs of pupils with EAL is commonplace in the literature (Davies, 2012a; Haneda and Wells, 2012; Cajkler and Hall, 2009).

The changes to the educational provision which gave way to mainstreaming aim to affirm equal opportunities for all learners meaning that NAEP with limited or no English are expected to be exposed to the same curricula, assessments and overall teaching and learning programmes. Kelly (2013, p.18), suggests that a more informed outlook would be to provide the kind

of access that “will enable them to achieve academically to the best of their ability” rather than just theorizing about access.

This puts the onus on school leaders, curriculum planners and trainers to hone and direct classroom practice towards harnessing the pre-existing skills and knowledge possessed by linguistically and culturally diverse pupils (Harper, et al., 2010). Gravelle (2005, p.8) has posited an interesting take on how inclusion is conceptualized by noting that we should consider “what we want to include pupils into before we begin to address issues to how to achieve this.”

From my point of view, this suggests that we should consider the existing educational policies, curricula, the language of education and whole school systems to which pupils are exposed and consider whether these need modification in order that they may offer pupils a better chance at success whatever their starting point, linguistic and cultural background. Gravelle (2005) addressed looking at inclusion from a cognitive standpoint which means building on and developing the background knowledge of learners. In the present study, in the context of EAL, mainstreaming means the inclusion of all EAL learners irrespective of their proficiency in English, educational history and point of entry into the school.

2.2.4 Professionals Working with EAL Pupils

At present, there is no direct route for EAL teaching in initial teacher education (ITE) (Leung, et al., 2014). Various institutions and organizations offer courses or modules within an ITE programme and at the

postgraduate level, there are some opportunities to specialize in EAL (Davies, 2012a). The lack of systematic professional training for teachers and professionals working with pupils with EAL is an on-going cause for concern in the UK (Cajkler and Hall, 2010; Anderson, 2008; Leung, 2001).

Findings from a study of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) suggest that teacher training programmes give “variable attention to EAL” and that in terms of continuing professional development, practical teaching methods and the development of appropriate resources were seen as two of the major concerns of NQTs (Cajkler and Hall, 2009, p. 153). The teaching standards state that teachers should:

“have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.” (DfE, 2012b, Teachers’ Standard 5, p.7)

It means then that teachers should receive the professional training to fulfill this standard. Leung (2001, p.2) surmised that EAL should be a “well-founded specialism with a secure place within the whole school curriculum”. The fact that EAL still does not have a separate or specific syllabus adds to the difficulty of it being regarded as a distinct curriculum subject, however, professional bodies such as NALDIC continue to be vociferous in their defence of EAL as an area of education (NALDIC, 2011).

The recommended government policy also mentions partnership teaching between language and subject specialists with support given by TAs (Ofsted, 2012a). If this partnership is to be effective, there has to be greater emphasis on training and preparing professionals in issues such as using previous educational experience, literacy, cultural practices and norms, personal identities and histories which assume a greater importance and play a role in the educational offered to pupils learning the language of education (de Jong et. al., 2013).

2.2.5 The Situation of EAL Pupils

Haneda (2009) argued that the educational experience for EAL pupils should consider the whole child while Cummins (2001) highlighted the importance of teachers having the opportunities to develop the knowledge base required to teach culturally and linguistically diverse pupils. In the educational context for pupils with EAL, the learning and teaching of EAL should relate to the pupil's cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural development. These processes interact in the classroom environment and are affected by community and societal factors (Haneda, 2009).

To add to this, Hawkins (2004, p. 14) implores educators not to treat individual pupils as the "basic unit of analysis" focusing solely on the cognitive-linguistic aspects of language development at the expense of the role of language in their social and emotional development. Through research conducted in the US with ELLs, Haneda (2009) identified the following factors as key to enabling EAL pupils to achieve at school; linguistic, cognitive, academic and social/emotional.

Therefore, educators must consider a pupil's language and cultural background, previous educational experiences, social and emotional factors as they attempt to create the optimal learning experience (Haneda, 2008; Jones and Saxena, 2003).

According to Haneda (2009), whilst the first three factors have been much researched, it has been argued that the social and emotional dimensions are often left behind. One of the aims of small group work is to create an inclusive and supportive classroom where the social and emotional needs can be nurtured (Coelho, 2012; Haynes and Zacarian, 2010). Graf (2011) too highlighted the view that placing EAL learners in groups provides cognitive as well as emotional scaffolding.

Cameron (2002) stated that the classroom context connects on a macro and micro level; the macro-level includes the sociocultural contexts of community, family and school while the micro-level focuses on the interaction between teachers and pupils as they work and collaborate on tasks. An approach which emphasizes interaction between learners during small group work is therefore perceived as appropriate in fostering language development through providing opportunities for participation and collaboration (Haneda and Wells, 2008; Gravelle, 2005).

Toth (2011) corroborated this view by adding that from both sociocultural and cognitive perspectives, interactions are deemed essential for linguistic development, particularly in classroom based settings. I believe that, as the learning of the additional language is both the vehicle and one of the targets

of learning, occasions for practice through interaction during small group work could provide suitable opportunities for language development. Conversely, such opportunities could also prove challenging as some pupils will have to adapt to different forms of learning.

2.2.6 UK National Guidelines on EAL

The government produced documents, the Primary and Secondary National Strategies: New Arrivals Excellence Programme Guidance (DCSF, 2007a; DCSF, 2007b), A Language in Common: assessing English as an additional language (QCA, 2000) and Aiming high: meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of EAL (DfES, 2005) are used to inform and guide the admissions and induction procedures and the integration and planning for the teaching and learning of NAEP in the school context of this research. I will now examine each individually.

2.2.6.1 A Language in Common

A language in common: assessing English as an additional language deals specifically with assessment procedures and descriptors for each level of progress attained by pupils (QCA, 2000). The school uses the assessment scale in this document with NAEP to ascertain what they may already know and the form of support that they will need.

2.2.6.2 Aiming High

Aiming high: meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of EAL (DfES, 2005) outlines induction procedures and whole school strategies to monitor the progress of NAEP.

2.2.6.3 Primary and Secondary National Strategies

The Primary and Secondary National Strategies: New Arrivals Excellence Programme Guidance (DCSF, 2007b) documents the rights and entitlements of NAEP, whole school procedures, assessment guidelines, models of support, case studies of good practice and training modules for schools. After the publication of the Swann Report (1995) and the C.R.E. Report (1986), the overriding consensus was that EAL pupils should not be excluded from mainstream provision but should receive all their education in mainstream classroom alongside their same-age peers. Subsequent government documents and educational policy statements continue to reflect this view (DfE, 2012a; DCSF, 2007b; DfES, 2004).

2.2.6.4 The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum in England: Key stage 3 and 4 framework document also contains guidelines for working with EAL pupils (DfE, 2013). Statements 4.5 and 4.6 of the inclusion section state:

“4.5 Teachers must also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Monitoring of progress should take account of the pupil’s age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages.”

“4.6 The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English. Teachers should plan teaching opportunities to help pupils develop their English and should aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subjects.” (DfE, 2013, p.8)

Together, these official documents guide the school's own EAL policy. Because this research takes place in a state secondary school, government policies and directives are used as guidance.

2.2.7 The EAL Policy of the School Context

The school's EAL policy (Appendix 1) is influenced by policy guidelines and advice presented in government documents. The audience for the EAL policy is the staff at the school and as such it is available to every member of staff and is stored on the school's web pages and a hard copy is given to each subject department at the start of every academic year.

The EAL policy was written in September 2011 by the members of the EAL department and offers advice on teaching and learning strategies for mainstream teachers and specific strategies to develop communication in English. Each term, the policy is reviewed and updated with changes made to the percentages and numbers of NAEP on roll. As the document is updated termly, staff will have an accurate idea of the number of EAL pupils on roll.

One of the recommended strategies outlined in the school's EAL policy is that of providing plenty of small group work and activities where listening and talking are encouraged (EAL Policy, 2014, p.3). Grouping strategies is one of the features that Ofsted inspectors are advised to look for in lessons (Ofsted, 2001). The EAL policy was written to be consulted and used in daily practice and the suggestions and advice given to teachers are outlined as bullet points to facilitate reading.

2.2.7.1 EAL School Policy: Section 1

The policy begins with a definition of EAL and an explanation of the language situation of pupils learning EAL within the context of the research site. Following this is a brief explanation of the school's situation with regards to the intake of EAL learners. The preceding sections state the beliefs and aims to be demonstrated by the school.

2.2.7.2 EAL School Policy: Section 2

The penultimate section contains advice and strategies for mainstream teachers towards the teaching and learning of NAEP. In this section which outlines specific strategies to develop communication in English, the suggestions all refer to different aspects of using talk to initiate, extend and foster learning and have been drawn from the prevailing literature about the inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons (Pim, 2012; Coelho, 2012; Grieve and Haining, 2011; DCSF, 2007b; DfE, 2001).

2.2.7.3 EAL School Policy: Section 3

The final section of the policy outlines guidance on using peer support in a language other than English in mainstream lessons. This section of the EAL policy was written at the time when small group was being encouraged as a strategy to engage and involve pupils in collaborative learning tasks. At this time, it was necessary to include this section because mainstream teachers were understandably concerned about the form and amount of support that could be provided by a same language peer as well as the actual language used in collaborative interaction in mainstream lessons.

2.3 Literature Review: Part 2

This part looks at the theoretical basis for some concepts used to make sense of the processes, actions and learning conditions in which NAEP are involved and which helped to direct this research effort. I will begin with interaction.

2.3.1 Interaction in Education

A focus on interaction in classroom settings began in the 1950s and 1960s and was based mainly on interaction between pupil and teacher (Hodgkinson and Mercer, 2008; Littleton and Howe, 2010). This type of interaction, known as Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) consisted of the teacher asking questions, pupils responding and then the teacher providing feedback on the pupil's response. This teacher-led interaction is common across cultures and curriculum subjects and is in line with a transmission model of teaching.

Gradually and with the change towards a more learner-centred approach to teaching, learner-learner interaction assumed greater importance (Littleton and Howe, 2010). During learner-learner interaction, pupils should engage in "dialogue" and "talk", exchanging information to help facilitate learning. Mercer and Littleton (2007, p.1) stated that classroom talk is a form of dialogue that takes place "during the course of educational activities." Markee and Kasper (2004, p.492) defined classroom talk occurring during small group work as "inter-related speech exchange systems" and stated that in order to maximise the potential of classroom talk, teachers should plan learning tasks in small groups.

2.3.2 Classroom Talk

To develop fluency in language, pupils need real opportunities to engage in purposeful talk and to transmit ideas about subject matter which should in turn “build a foundation for reading and writing” (Fisher et al, 2008, p. 2). Talk is vital in this process and where EAL is concerned, the classroom provides an authentic situation in which pupils can engage in extended talk (Coelho, 2012).

2.3.2.1 Importance of talk to NAEP

For many NAEP, the school and classroom environment are their primary sources of English input (Coelho, 2012; Gibbons, 2009). Professionals working with pupils in these environments should seek ways to improve and develop the English language proficiency of pupils and group-based activities in which learners participate and interact through talk is one way to access both content and language (Wardman, 2012; Xu, 2010). From an EAL perspective, classroom talk during small group work can aid pupils in aspects such as vocabulary development and clarification of misunderstandings.

Furthermore and as it concerns the present study, a small group may prove the ideal setting for some learners to build their social skills and confidence in speaking and experimenting with new language and structures, new forms of learning and interacting with their school aged peers.

Hodgkinson and Mercer (2008, p.xi) see talk during interactive activities as “the most important educational tool for guiding the development of

understanding and for jointly constructing knowledge.” Talk is also essential to interthinking which is described as the link between the social and cognitive functions of group talk and allows learners to engage and build on each other’s ideas through oral language (Mercer, 2000).

As a cognitive tool, talk can lead to knowledge construction through pupils building on each other’s ideas, explanations and new language in a small group setting (Pantaleo, 2007). In other words, the social and cognitive processes support and complement each other as learners interact through talk in a group situation. Based on my understanding, language and understanding can develop through use and in interaction with others and following the background of this research a small group is one of the ways in which teachers can plan for pupils to practise English and develop their language proficiency.

During the 1980s and 1990s, developing group work strategies to facilitate “talk for learning” was encouraged for EAL learners (Bourne, 2007, p. 203). Gravelle (2005) posited the view that talk is central to effective pedagogy for EAL learners as it supports the development of skills through the exchange of ideas, the extension of knowledge and understanding through talk. In the area of research, Shoba (2013) has identified the need for more explorations of talk in multilingual classroom settings since to date this topic has not been accorded much attention.

2.3.3 Interaction and SLA

Research on classroom interaction in SLA settings began in the 1960s and was largely influenced by research on parent and child interaction in L1 acquisition (Spada and Lightbown, 2009; Cook, 2008). As interaction became more popular, different theories about its role and importance in SLA were put forward and some of these will now be explained.

2.3.3.1 Interaction hypothesis

One theory, the interaction hypothesis in SLA argues that language is developed and acquired through conversational interaction (Cook, 2008). The interaction hypothesis is related to the communicative and content-based approaches in language teaching and was influenced by the comprehensible input theory (Spada and Lightbown, 2009). Comprehensible input is defined by Mitchell and Myles (2004, p. 47) as “second language input just beyond a learner’s current competence.” In other words, the language received by the learner should not be too simple or too complex.

2.3.3.2 Negotiation of meaning

Another theory, negotiation of meaning refers to the act of seeking clarification to support understanding during a conversation and is seen as a central concept as it is considered to keep communication flowing (Cook, 2008; Ortega, 2009). Negotiation of meaning or clarification of meaning has been noted by Bygate and Samuda (2009) as one of the pedagogic uses of interactive tasks and by Ellis (2005) as one of the characteristics of interaction needed for learning to take place.

2.3.3.3 Recasts and feedback

Interaction is also made up of recasts and feedback (Gass and Selinker, 2008). Recasts refer to a reformulation of incorrect language where the meaning is maintained but in a more refined manner (Ortega, 2009). Through feedback, a pupil will know whether language produced was correct and if not, what is needed to make it correct. Feedback provides pupils with an opportunity to focus on producing and comprehending language (Gass and Selinker, 2008).

2.3.3.4 Interaction and language development

With regards to SLA, Ellis (2003) posited that the learning process should be collaborative with learning achieved from and in interaction with others. Swain et. al (2002) have also put forward the view that learner-learner interaction fosters language learning. Based on a review of interaction in foreign language contexts, Philp and Tognini (2009) identified the following ways in which interaction is seen to facilitate learning.

Firstly, interaction can provide a context where learners are exposed to the language. Secondly, there is a context to communicate and lastly, learners are able to experiment with new language. These are also applicable to a classroom situation where pupils are learning EAL (Gibbons, 2009; Graf, 2011).

Mackey (1999) noted a positive relationship between interaction and language development in learners of English. In Mackey's (1999) research on input and interaction in second language development, learners who were

involved in structure-focused interaction developed more rapidly than those who were not. It was also noted that learners moved along a developmental path although still within their developmental stages. The tasks utilized in Mackey's study were communicative based with opportunities for interaction between the participants. The findings of Mackey's (1999) study suggest that there is a positive relationship between interaction and language development in learners and also highlighted the fact that further support is needed if learners are to progress beyond their developmental stage.

To optimize opportunities for interaction, the teacher needs to organize, prepare and guide pupils in small group work. There should be adequate opportunities to use the language which should be contextually situated in the learning tasks and activities (Gibbons, 2006). If interaction is to play a vital role in learning tasks, pupils must have a reason to focus on language and be given opportunities where they can use language to express personal meanings (Johnson, 2008). Dörnyei and Murphey (2003, p.76), stated that interaction is one of the "principal mediational means of learning in the language classroom."

2.3.4 Interaction and EAL

With EAL learners, interaction is seen as one of the primary ways in which learning takes place as pupils engage with each other in activities that contain opportunities for learning (Storch and Aldosari, 2012; Soto Huerta, 2012; Walqui, 2006). According to Harper et al (2010), evidence from SLA research and as discussed above suggests that interaction can assist language development.

Cameron (2002) and Graf (2011) noted that learning through participation and interaction is a recommended strategy for EAL learners. Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron (2011) also found evidence from a synthesis of research which shows that classroom interaction supports pupils' academic language through conversational scaffolding.

2.3.5 Academic language

Academic language refers to the register related to subject content that pupils need in order to engage with subject content and to progress in school (Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron, 2011; Valdes, 2004). From an EAL perspective, a helpful strategy is to provide pupils with opportunities where they can interact with other learners and partake in active verbal engagement that will promote language development (Gravelle, 2005).

Moreover, good practice in mainstream classrooms ought to engage pupils in opportunities where they use English while learning academic content (Brentnall, 2009; Clegg, 2007). These instances to develop academic language are vitally important for NAEP to nurture language at the cognitive level necessary for academic purposes. I will now discuss the importance of academic language and the difference between the types of language displayed by pupils new to English.

2.3.5.1 Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)

The difference in the type of language used by pupils learning the language of schooling was first noted by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976, cited in Cummins, 1992, p. 17) who found that immigrant pupils could converse in face-to-face social situations in their first and second languages with peers even though their literacy skills were below age-appropriate levels in both languages. This led to the development of the distinction between “surface fluency” and “conceptual-linguistic knowledge” which in turn became known as BICS and CALP respectively (Cummins, 1992, p.17).

Shuy’s (1981, cited in Cummins, 1992, p. 18) explanation of the distinction between the two types of language, “visible” and “less visible” also helped to shape the interpretation of BICS and CALP. Visible language refers to the basic vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation used in daily social encounters whereas less visible language specifies the not so easily measured aspects dealing with semantics and functional meaning (Baker, 2011). Less visible language is context-reduced and is where academic language is needed to show understanding and internalization of lesson content (Baker, 2011).

Cummins (2000) further explained that BICS are the use of everyday language whereas CALP describes the knowledge of how to use the language skills in subject content. It is said that a pupil with EAL will take a longer time to acquire CALP; from 5-10 years and between 2-3 years to

acquire BICS (Conteh, 2015; Thomas and Collier, 2002; Cummins, 2000). It is possible that the ability to function at this surface level fluency or BICS can mask the fact that, for some pupils the language needed to understand and engage with academic content is not yet fully developed (Cummins, 1992; Conteh, 2015).

Furthermore, according to Cummins (2001), pupils with a high degree of CALP are expected to be successful learners because they are now able to engage with cognitively demanding tasks and context-reduced communication. It has also been suggested that pupils with little or no schooling in their L1 could take a longer time to develop CALP (Thomas and Collier, 2002; Cummins, 2000).

However, to support pupils' development of CALP, to enable them to complete cognitively demanding tasks requires teaching and coaching pupils to use academic language in the mainstream classroom and group work with peers is one way in which this can be achieved (Bunch, 2009; Gibbons, 2006).

2.3.5.2 BICS/CALP and its implications for small group work

The nature of small group work as described in this research is beneficial for providing a smaller, less threatening setting in which pupils can practise and develop language skills (Conteh, 2015; Gibbons, 2006). To advance and expand language, pupils new to the language of education must have opportunities to practise and use language in both academic and social situations (Kotler et al., 2001; Naicker and Balfour, 2009). Kotler et al.,

(2001) and Naicker and Balfour (2009) conducted research which demonstrate the importance and value of providing opportunities to develop language to the level where pupils are able to nurture and use CALP.

Firstly, Kotler et al., (2001) discussed the “Talking Partners” programme, the aim of which was to provide support in the oral and academic registers needed for school success. This was done by placing primary-aged EAL pupils in groups of three with teachers who had been trained to deliver this programme. Each group was limited to three pupils to encourage peer-peer talk and the outcome showed that pupils were more confident in speaking and were able to transfer text structure to their writing and develop the “specific registers for academic success” or CALP (Kotler et al., 2001, p.418).

Secondly, Naicker and Balfour (2009) described a programme which sought to develop CALP and to increase communicative confidence. To achieve this, in mainstream Arts based subjects, pupils were introduced to content vocabulary and linguistic forms and over a period of time engaged in different activities to practise and develop their understanding and ability to convey meaning through their oral and written responses to tasks. Small group work in mainstream lessons was one of the strategies used to support pupils to increase their confidence to communicate about subject matter. In conclusion, it was noted that, an increase in constructive classroom talk based around the academic content and with careful planning supported the development of pupils’ CALP (Naicker and Balfour, 2009).

Thirdly, Kramer-Dahl et al., (2007) explained how an intervention programme focusing on improving competency in English and subject knowledge saw pupils developing language on two levels in the preparation of a task and ultimately making strides in their oral skills and demonstrating an understanding of the subject topic. Kramer-Dahl et al., (2007) concluded that the group environment supported both social and cognitive aspects of language, a point also shared by Bunch (2009).

From the examples above, it can be seen that classroom group work can provide the setting to use and develop language on two levels. Firstly, this is because pupils are in a social setting where BICS is used in context embedded situations with peers and teachers. Secondly, pupils can move their language from the social to the academic level required to engage with and present subject content (Tognini et al., 2010; Gibbons, 2003).

Through reading and researching for this study, I am more aware of the importance in recognizing the language needs of pupils new to English and the distinction between the levels of language they display and how this language can develop in and for different contexts. I see the classroom as a social space where relationships are formed and nurtured and where pupils use their interpersonal communication skills (Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron, 2011).

At the same time, the classroom is a place where cognitive and academic capabilities are developed through subject content. Both BICS and CALP have a context and the implications for small group work are that with peer-

peer interaction centred on subject content, with appropriate resources and planning for language and linguistic development, pupils are in a position to build their CALP and move between kinds and levels of language (Conteh, 2015; Gibbons, 2003).

In cases where a pupil has developed BICS, this can enable the pupil to still participate in group tasks gradually building on this level of language by reformulating, recasting and rehearsing the type of language required for a particular academic context (Cummins, 2000). This was evident in the report by Kotler et al., (2001) and is one of the ways in which knowledge of a pupil can assist the mainstream teacher to modify and plan with appropriate scaffolding for moments of difficulty. The lack of fully developed CALP should not hinder a pupil's participation in cognitively demanding tasks so this is where well planned and guided group work can lead to understanding of subject content (Conteh, 2015; Kramer-Dahl et al., 2007).

To me, this signifies that language development is a work in progress and the road to CALP should be seen as such. By participating in group work in a linguistically and cognitively supportive environment, CALP can be fostered through using the social skills and knowledge that the pupil already manipulates (Naicker et al., (2009). The pupils who participated in the study by Kramer-Dahl et al, (2007) are from a range of linguistic background and competencies but all learning English and subject content. From their point of view, they were able to develop their thinking skills,

were given “challenging things to do and we are never left out. It helps build our analys. . . analytical skills” (Kramer-Dahl et al, 2007, p.196)

Group work is a time where pupils can share their thoughts and ideas to further their knowledge and focus on lesson content and in this way expand their CALP (Bunch, 2009; Gravelle, 2005). It is also where the teacher can expect pupils to have and to be given language support through interactive group tasks. Conteh (2015, p. 65) points out that the “progression from BICS to CALP is not automatic” but should be facilitated by strategies and support put in place by teachers.

The BICS / CALP distinction is seen to facilitate the interpretation of data examining “linguistic and academic progress” of EAL pupils (Cummins, 1992: 22). I would like to add that this should be done with caution and some flexibility with consideration given to the level of L1 literacy, the background knowledge of pupils and the individual demands of subject content. Surely, this distinction is useful but should perhaps not be seen as separate but with a link from BICS to CALP and CALP, always evolving (Gibbons, 2003).

I will now discuss group work in SLA, interaction and small group work with examples of previous studies highlighting its relevance.

2.3.6 Group Work in SLA

Classroom research highlighting the linguistic and social benefits that can be derived from communication support the view of organizing pupils in small groups or pairs to enable learner-learner interaction and to foster

learning and the development of language skills (Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron, 2011; Philp et al., 2010).

There are both theoretical and pedagogical reasons to bolster the use of small group work in additional language learning contexts (McDonough, 2004; Storch, 2002). Theoretical perspectives state that small group activities provide interactional opportunities in which pupils can hear and use academic language (Gibbons, 2006).

Pedagogical approaches suggest that it provides learners with more time to speak the language, promotes learner autonomy, gives teachers a chance to work with individual learners and lastly, that learners may feel more confident and less anxious (Long and Porter, 1985; Gibbons, 2006; McDonough, 2004).

Group work is inclusive and aims to promote sociocultural integration and in multi-ethnic settings, productivity as a result of group work can also be measured in terms of positive intergroup relations (Graf, 2011; Coelho, 2012). In the school setting of this study, the pupil population is culturally and linguistically diverse.

2.3.7 Interaction and Small Group Work

At the tertiary level, research findings (for example Storch 2007; McDonough 2004; Dobinson, 2001) based on diverse aspects of learner-learner interaction in ESL contexts demonstrate that opportunities to interact can facilitate the acquisition of an additional language.

To begin, Storch (2007) investigated pair and individual work on an editing task and analysed the nature of peer interaction in an ESL tertiary level class. Learner-learner interaction was audio-recorded and then transcribed for analysis. Analysis of the transcription of pair talk revealed active engagement on the part of the learners and concluded that pair work does provide opportunities to use language and could therefore lead to language learning. In spite of these findings, Storch (2007) stresses the need for more empirical evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of pair/group work in comparison to individual work.

McDonough's (2004) small scale study with Thai EFL University students revealed that learners who had participated in pair and small group activities demonstrated an improved production of target forms. Dobinson's (2001) tertiary level study investigated the links between classroom interaction and vocabulary learning and revealed positive and negative findings. Video recordings were made of classroom interaction and this was then transcribed for analysis.

On the one hand, Dobinson (2001) noted that classroom interaction can play a role in vocabulary learning as pupils have to repeat and focus on particular vocabulary which then enables them to retain and recall such words. On the other hand, some pupils who did not overtly participate in classroom interaction still recalled substantial amounts of vocabulary which raises the question of the level of participation and interaction necessary for learning to take place.

Storch (2007), McDonough (2004) and Dobinson (2001) emphasize the need the need for studies with other age groups and in different learning environments and educational contexts.

As well as the above, Pinter (2007) conducted a study with primary-aged pupils learning EFL in Hungary. Pinter investigated the benefits of peer-peer interaction based on a communicative task in which learners had to note the differences between various pictures. Task performances were recorded after which the dialogues between the pupils were analysed. Results indicated that peer-peer interaction can be beneficial even with pupils who have a low level of competence. Pinter (2007) found that pupils' fluency improved as they had to repeat the task and over time, the pupils involved gradually became more sensitive towards each other as they learnt to build on each other's language.

Pinter (2007) concluded that interaction with peers on repeated occasions can be a rich learning experience for younger pupils as they learn to rely on each other and that the practice gained through task repetition can be beneficial with learners of low proficiency. Pinter (2007) also highlighted the need for additional research, with more learners in specific contexts and with different age groups in order to support her claims. A major limitation of Pinter's (2007) study is that it involved only one learner pair.

Bunch (2009) investigated the challenges and opportunities for language minority pupils during an oral presentation task in a secondary classroom. The oral presentations and group work talk were audiotaped, transcribed and

then analysed. It was found that interaction in small group work led to both challenges and opportunities for pupils to extend their communicative and interactional skills and there was evidence of active participation by language minority pupils (Bunch, 2009).

The classroom setting of Bunch's study was specifically designed to accommodate pupils needing language support which included peer support, the promotion of equal participation and clear expectations regarding the lesson outcome. Bunch (2009) encourages mainstream teachers to plan opportunities for interaction in which pupils new to English can participate.

These findings provide insight into the relation between learner-learner interaction while learning an additional language, the conditions necessary for learning and language development and importantly, the fact that teachers are in a position to create interactional opportunities. The findings are also evidence that small group activities which encourage interaction are useful for language learning (Swain et al, 2002). These findings uphold the view that group work can provide learners with "an improved quantity and quality of practice in the language that they are learning" (Storch and Aldosari, 2012, p.32).

In a study of the interactional opportunities between primary-aged pupils learning EAL and their EAL specialist teachers or TAs' withdrawal teaching, Wardman (2012) found that the specialist EAL teachers provided more opportunities for pupils to develop their higher order thinking skills and to extend their language production. Although Wardman's (2012) small

scale investigation focused on interaction between pupils and adults, it contributes to the value of interaction during small group work as a context in which there are increased opportunities for personalisation and attending to the language needs of pupils.

2.3.8 Benefits of Small Group Work

A group, according to Dörnyei and Murphey (2003, p.13), is characterized by:

“interaction among the members who share a common goal for being together and who demonstrate commitment to the realization of a learning task.”

Small group work is recognized for its positive effect on academic achievement, affective and social outcomes and the development of pupils' cooperative skills and also for the teacher to support the management of large classes (Muijs and Reynolds, 2011; Gravelle, 2005). Small group interaction is promoted in language learning for several reasons (Gagné and Parks, 2013; Storch, 2007; Pica 1991).

Firstly, small group work increases opportunities for language practice through appropriate tasks in which pupils must interact and use the target language in order to carry out the task (Cook, 2008; Storch, 2007). Tasks can be tailored to suit different contexts and purposes and to the needs of the pupils in that particular group. With NAEP, these opportunities to use the language are even more pronounced as pupils might be more willing to participate through dialogue in smaller and more intimate settings, plus

there is more time for individual pupils to talk (Wardman, 2012; Gibbons, 2006).

Secondly, during small group work, there could be an improvement of the quality of talk and opportunities to use language for a wider range of functions (Storch, 2007). Long and Porter (1994) and Gravelle (2005) are of the opinion that where pupils are not under pressure to produce answers, they can therefore use the extended talking time to develop discourse competence, concentrate on spelling and pronunciation. This time can also be utilized to reflect on language and social skills, taking turns and waiting before speaking; conventions of dialogue. Additionally, pupils might be able to develop skills such as turn-taking, summarizing and clarifying.

Thirdly, small group work can support differentiated instruction. Individual pupils can be placed in groups with other pupils of similar ability or of a higher ability but who will be able to provide support. In small groups, pupils can work on material suited to their individual needs. Individual small groups can complete work simultaneously in groups of varying abilities and perhaps even with different time frames to complete the work (Gravelle, 2005).

Finally, linguistically insecure pupils might find that a small group is a more intimate environment for developing and gaining confidence (Graf, 2011). In EAL settings where pupils might not be at the same stage of language ability, learners might be more willing to experiment with the language, to try out new ideas than they would in larger groups. Schleppegrell and

O'Hallaron (2011, p.6) recommend small group work because it has the potential to create an atmosphere of "trust and risk-taking" as pupils engage with content. As Gravelle (2005) highlighted interaction in small group work can also provide a positive affective climate which could encourage some pupils to become more involved in lessons at a personal level.

In a study to gather the perceptions of teachers on effective strategies for pupils with EAL, Hite and Evans (2006, p.105) reported that teachers found learner-learner interaction in small group work beneficial to EAL pupils as they were able to use language naturally and were "producers of language" rather than recipients. Storch (2007) talks about collective scaffolding in reference to situations of small group work where learning and development occur. Collective scaffolding occurs when "learners pool together their linguistic resources in order to reach resolutions to language-related problems they encounter" (Storch, 2007, p.144). The point is when pupils work collaboratively in small groups opportunities for learning can be created.

Swain et al (2002) discussed interaction from a sociocultural theory perspective and explored the idea that as a cognitive tool, language is used to make sense of knowledge and as a social tool for communicative purposes. When speakers engage in the cognitive act, what is said or their utterances become the object which can be further explored, co-constructed and transformed into knowledge by members of a group (Swain et al., 2002).

This literature review so far has focused on small group work as an appropriate setting for NAEP who are learning an additional language in mainstream classrooms. A common thread in the sub-sections of the literature review is language because we are dealing with language acquisition. English is the language of education and the one that pupils are learning to use in mainstream classrooms.

To varying degrees, the pupils concerned are already users of other languages and the recommendation from experts in the field of SLA and EAL is that for learners, it would be profitable to allow space for the use of the L1 in mainstream classrooms (Coelho, 2012; Garcia, 2009; Bialystok, 2001; Cummins, 2001). From my point of view, this goes beyond outward representations and demonstrations of the language but encompasses actively using the L1 to support cognitive, academic and social development. I will now briefly discuss the use of the L1 in mainstream lessons as this appears in the study.

2.3.9 Use of L1 in Mainstream Classrooms

The increasing number of multilingual pupils in the educational system raises amongst other issues, the value or place of the L1 in mainstream classrooms (Kenner and Hickey, 2008). There have been arguments for pedagogical approaches which successfully and meaningfully integrate the languages with which learners are familiar to enable access to subject content, to support academic and cognitive growth (Karathanos, 2009, p.616; Thomas and Collier, 2002).

Levine (1990), for example, saw the mainstream classroom as a place where EAL pupils' additional language learning should occur and therefore as a place for a learner's existing language and linguistic knowledge. Others (Gearon et al., 2009; Kramsch, 2009) call for a re-thinking and re-evaluation of teaching orientations that place emphasis on the multilingual learner and how their cultural and linguistic backgrounds can be woven into their current educational experiences.

Approaches such as translanguaging seek to combine the different heritages, identities and histories inherent in the languages that pupils bring to the classrooms (Creese and Blackledge, 2010). In classroom based discussions around a learning task, the use of the L1 can give pupils a shared perspective of the task (Antón and DiCamillia, 1999). In this sense, the L1 functions as a thinking tool that pupils can rely on in interaction with same language peers. Outside the immediate classroom context, the recognition of a pupil's L1 demonstrates an acceptance of identity and cultural background (De Angelis, 2011).

Because of this, teachers are encouraged to acknowledge and where possible, utilise pupils' existing languages in their new experiences (Kenner and Hickey, 2008). The EAL policy of the school where this research is based advises that L1 usage between same language peers is acceptable when pupils are collaborating on learning tasks.

2.4 Literature Review: Part 3

In this part, I will look at aspects of sociocultural theory as a means to understanding and grounding the ideas influencing and forming the basis of this research.

2.4.1 Sociocultural Theory

The theoretical framework underlying the ideas in this research is based on sociocultural theory. An increased emphasis on language use and development has contributed to research approaches that differ from the cognitivist, linguistic and psycholinguistic orientations (Gass and Selinker, 2008).

One such approach which has been applied to SLA is sociocultural theory because it takes into consideration the context in which the pupil is learning, the members of the learning community and the interaction between the participants and for this reason is seen as a suitable theoretical framework for this research which is looking at small group work in mainstream lessons in one school (Conteh, 2015; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). In sociocultural theory, identity and cultural awareness are also emphasized and the pupil participants of this research are of diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Walqui, 2006).

Sociocultural theory has its background in the ideas of Vygotsky who proposed that in addition to biological, sociocultural factors were also indispensable to cognitive growth and development (Wertsch, 1985). Sociocultural theory advocates that learning is a “human mental activity”

that occurs in a social context and in contact with fellow learners (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994, p.467).

Individuals are first considered as social beings who use their awareness to construct learning within a group, through interaction with others. As part of a group, pupils can offer their personal cultures and accept from others to complement, create or build knowledge. This learning then takes place on an individual level where it is integrated into a person's mental structure (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

I understand this to mean that social interaction, language, culture and the environment all play a part in learning which is envisioned as a process in which the learner moves from one level to the next. To me, Vygotsky (1978) is emphasizing the development or construction of learning, the interaction that takes place with others and how this interaction facilitates learning and cognitive growth.

According to Ellis (2003), from the sociocultural point of view, learning takes place in interaction with others. This point underlines the importance of the support provided by a knowledgeable participant to a learner which is one of the key ideas of both Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1986). The support or scaffold given by the knowledgeable participant is gradually reduced until the learner is able to do the task independently (Coelho, 2012).

The scaffolding idea is related to and has its basis in Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is one of the

main tenets or constructs of sociocultural theory. The others are mediation, language as the main vehicle of thought and social interaction as the basis of learning and development (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Wertsch, 1985).

2.4.2 The zone of proximal development (ZPD)

The ZPD is seen as the space where learning takes place, where a learner is supported by a more knowledgeable other to complete a task. Learning takes place when there is a challenge ahead of the learner's current level and support is given to work and succeed at that level (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Through the ZPD, one can perceive the level of development achieved and the developmental potential based on support given to the pupil.

The actual developmental level refers to what a learner can perform independently while the ZPD includes those functions and activities that the learner can perform with the assistance or support of someone who has already mastered that function (Hedegaard, 2005; de Bot et al., 2005; Wertsch, 1985). Another notion of the ZPD which makes it attractive to education is scaffolding (Hedegaard, 2005; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006, p.263).

2.4.2.1 Scaffolding

Firstly, assisted performance or scaffolding which can be explained as the support given to the learner either by another learner who has already acquired that skill or by the teacher (Wood et al., 1976). Scaffolding involves organising a situation so that learners are gradually able to take control of their learning and to develop understanding as they become more

skilful (Walqui, 2006). Cook (2008) asserts that in sociocultural theory, the social assistance implied in scaffolding is provided by people rather than by physical resources and in the case of this research, for the NAEP, would be given by peers.

Hammond and Gibbons (2005, p. 8) argued that although the term scaffolding was not used by Vygotsky, it is “an inherent part of his theory of learning as collaborative and interactionally-driven.” Scaffolding is interactive because of the involvement of two or more people who jointly work on and achieve an end result to a task.

The social nature of learning and the help provided by an adult or expert to someone less of an expert was also considered by Bruner (1978) and Wood et al., (1976). The idea gathered from Vygotsky’s theory of assisted performance was further developed into the notion of scaffolding by Bruner and others (Bruner, 1986; Wood et al., 1976). According to Bruner, it was through “studies of tutoring and what makes it effective” that this idea could emerge (1986, p. 75).

Bruner’s main contributions that are relevant to this research and sharing links with sociocultural theory are scaffolding as described above, the importance of interactional opportunities for learning to take place and the idea that social factors are important for cognitive growth (Bruner, 1986; Bruner, 1978).

Bruner theorized that learning occurs through active interactions with more knowledgeable peers and that social factors, particularly language are important for growth (Bruner, 1978). Bruner views learners as active in the process of learning. For learning to take place, there must be interactional opportunities. Learners should be active and involved in the process, adapting and reacting to changes and building upon existing knowledge. Another important aspect of Bruner's theories is language. To Bruner (1978; 1986), language is an aid to cognitive development, to give understanding, form and meaning to ideas and is developed through interaction and social encounters.

2.4.3 Mediation

Mediation, another tenet of sociocultural theory can be thought of as the use of a tool to accomplish an action (Walqui, 2006; Wertsch, 1985). This is further explained by the idea that higher forms of human mental activity are mediated and that humans have control over these tools which can be used to achieve an outcome (Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). From the sociocultural point of view, language is a "tool for thought" or a means of mediation in mental activity (Mitchell and Myles, 2004, p.194; Gass and Selinker, 2008).

From this line of thought, learning is perceived to be socially mediated with face-to-face interaction and shared processes playing a vital role (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Wertsch, 1985). Sociocultural theory shifts the focus

from the individual learner to the social activity of learning and interaction during learning tasks. Mediation is one of the key constructs that makes sociocultural theory different from the more traditional approaches to SLA and one of the reasons for its attractiveness to additional language learning (Pass and Mantero, 2009; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

2.4.4 Social Interaction

Social interaction is seen to play a fundamental role in learning and learning is described as a social process which is one of the theories of Vygotsky (1978). In sociocultural theory, interaction is construed as a social practice that shapes and constructs learning and acknowledges the social and psychological dimension to learning (Ellis, 1999). Learning takes place through social interaction and is not a solitary experience (Vygotsky, 1978). There is always this idea of social interaction and collaboration leading to the acquisition of knowledge.

2.4.5 Relevance of Sociocultural Theory

Mitchell and Myles (2004) stated that the study of different types of peer interaction in the language classroom is one of the more active strands of sociocultural research on second language learning. The fundamental contributions of Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985) and Bruner (1986) to the development of sociocultural theory are the assistance or support provided by one who is more knowledgeable or who has already acquired a particular skill to one who is learning, the concept of scaffolding

and the ZPD, mediation, the active construction of knowledge and learning as a social and interactive encounter.

Walqui (2006, p.159) made the point that education is embedded in a “social milieu” and learning is therefore a combination of cognitive development and shared social practices. A sociocultural approach situates language use in its social and cultural contexts. As Hawkins (2010) posits, what happens inside and outside the classroom are equally relevant in the development of language and the teacher must remember that the EAL learner comes to the classroom with knowledge, language skills and more often than not, community and family resources. Hawkins (2010, p.100) challenges teachers to learn with pupils, find out about their beliefs, world views and ways of being and seeing the world and then find ways to incorporate these into their teaching. To summarize, learning is viewed as social, individual, inter-mental and intra-mental.

A sociocultural framework is relevant to this research because of the focus on small group work as the context in which NAEP can be supported to develop language skills. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the learning context, the learners and their social interactions and in small group work, these areas interlink. Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 280) assert that language is closely connected with its social context and learning is therefore linked to “social and local ecology” and not just in an “individual’s cognition”.

To further explain, learning occurs through and with resources embedded in social interactions and practices in which pupils participate. Learning takes

place through the support of the social context. The social context, I believe includes other learners and a sociocultural perspective is appropriate because it emphasizes the social environment and the encounters with other learners. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the assistance provided by others, learning based on social interaction and the creation of new knowledge through educational dialogue (Harper et. al., 2010; Cook, 2008; Bruner, 1978).

Cook (2008, p.230) does warn, however, that sociocultural theory might be “too vague to give precise teaching help” and that the theory concerns the process of development rather than the end point. In other words, it is the day to day unfolding of classroom activities and events that give meaning to this theory rather than educators attempting to pinpoint specific strategies or to use the concept to justify an outcome. Based on the points above, there is theoretical support that values interaction as a means by which learners can practise and develop language and therefore makes sociocultural theory a suitable framework to position this research.

2.5 Literature Review: Part 4

This section examines the perceptions that teachers, TAs and pupils hold about small group work.

2.5.1 Perceptions

I begin this section by defining attitudes, beliefs and perceptions and clarifying their meanings within the context of this study. In parts of the literature consulted (for example, Fernández Dobao and Blum, 2013; Hunt, 2011; Saint Léger and Storch, 2009; Barkhuizen, 1998), I have come across all three terms, sometimes used interchangeably. Because I want the voice of the participants to inform the research, I have to uncover their thoughts.

According to Pajares (1992, p. 309), “attitudes, values, judgements and perceptions” are just some of the different words for beliefs. These different words contribute to the idea of it being a “messy” construct but one which could be clarified when precise meanings are given and adhered to (Pajares, 1992, p. 329). It is therefore necessary to clarify how each is used in this research.

2.5.2 Clarification of terminology: attitudes, beliefs and perceptions

Belief

Kagan (1992) stated that there is no shared understanding of beliefs while Pajares (1992, p. 307) found that the different definitions are due to a lack of consistency in understanding and adhering to belief constructs. In some cases, where belief is used, it is compared to or equated with other constructs such as knowledge and attitude (Pettit, 2011).

The distinction between belief and knowledge is that belief is based on an evaluation, value and emotive commitments and judgement while knowledge which must be true is based on an objective fact and changes or evolves with new experiences (Pajares, 1992, p. 312). Nespor (1987) noted that past events shape and influence beliefs and according to Borg (2001),

“belief is a mental state which has as its content a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding it, although the individual may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others” (Borg, 2001, p. 186)

From Borg’s definition above, belief is a feeling that something is true and is unique to each individual who is cognizant of the fact that others may not share their belief. In the educational context, beliefs affect how we see our pupils and the experiences we plan for them; in this sense teacher belief has an impact on teacher behaviour (Kagan, 1992). Belief has also been equated with attitude and in this construct, belief refers to the cognitive

aspect while attitude is affective; a way of responding whereas belief is what should be done (Pajares, 1992).

Attitude

Pajares (1992, p. 309) stated that attitude is belief in disguise. In support of this, Oskamp and Schultz (2005) and Ajzen and Fishbein (2000) described attitude as divided into three aspects with the cognitive aspect based on an overall evaluation of a person's beliefs which is informed by thoughts and knowledge. The affective aspect is an emotional response that expresses the degree of preference for an object or behaviour and can be changed (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000).

Attitudes can be the way in which ability is shown, in other words, evidence of belief is shown in attitude and attitude is an outcome of belief (Pajares, 1992). Belief therefore informs and forms attitude. The other aspect of attitude is a person's perceived behavioural control and is closely linked to self-efficacy (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000). For the purposes of this research, where attitude is used, I wish to focus on the affective aspect of attitude, that is, the feelings or emotions derived from the daily practice of the participants. Barkhuizen (1998) noted that attitudes have sometimes been referred to as perceptions.

Perception

Perception is another word that is sometimes used to signify belief (Pajares, 1992, p. 309). Barkhuizen (1998, p.89) outlined the following conditions for the use of the term perceptions; when a feeling is expressed, when judgements and predictions are made. Perception encompasses three elements, a feeling, a judgement and a prediction which occur when a learning activity or encounter has been described and assigned a purpose. Perception is built up of different perspectives; of groups of participants who either took part in or delivered a learning activity and then giving their perspective (Block, 1994).

Perception is what teachers and for the purposes of this research, TAs think about how they carry out their jobs, how they see their planning and lesson delivery and the effect of these on the learners. For the learners, it is how they assess or make sense of learning encounters. Perceptions imply an analysis of the situation (Block, 1994; Barkhuizen, 1998).

In research by Hunt (2011) and Saint Léger and Storch (2009) perceptions is used to mean what is personal to the learner, how the learner feels about being involved in particular activities and is captured through self-assessment. However, attitude is used in connection with the reaction of the learners towards the activities implemented by teachers (Saint Léger and Storch, 2009).

In this section, relevant studies about the perceptions that teachers, TAs and pupils hold about small group work and interaction will be discussed. I will

show how these studies are pertinent to the present research and my attempt to build on the ideas and concepts found in the literature review. Teacher and pupil perceptions of their experiences of second and foreign language teaching and learning have been increasingly recognized and studied to inform pedagogy and theory (White, 2008).

Barkhuizen (1998) argued the value of soliciting teacher and pupil perceptions of their experiences in the language classroom as the two views do not necessarily concur and it would be interesting to note the different perceptions held by each side. It is worth noting that there is a paucity of research in the particular area of EAL, work with NAEP and small group work but a wealth of information on related issues such as teacher and pupil perceptions in various areas and/or sub-fields in SLA, EFL and ESL. I will therefore refer to relevant research and findings from these contexts and demonstrate how they relate or contribute to the present research.

2.5.3 Teacher perceptions

In this research, teacher perceptions refer to how teachers envisage their practice; the planning, teaching and learning, pupil response and usefulness or efficacy of, in this case, small group work for the language development of NAEP. Breen (2002) conducted a study which looked at how mainstream teachers of ESL describe their work with pupils. The analysis of the questionnaire and the interview data identified ten general principles which the teachers expressed as forming the strategies and approaches used when working with ESL pupils.

These principles, based on the teachers' experiences are indicative of their perceptions of ESL pupils and the pedagogy suited to their learning needs. Two of these principles are the need to give priority to oral language development and using group work to facilitate the understanding of content and the use of English (Breen, 2002). I have highlighted these two principles as they are related to the topic of the present research. Bowers et al (2010) in their research on effective teaching and learning strategies for ELLs also highlighted the priority that oral language development in settings which support interaction should be given.

Tognini (2008) investigated teachers' perceptions of interaction amongst pupils in a foreign language learning context. The findings revealed that the features of learner-learner interaction were linked to language choice and the nature of the tasks. Learner-learner interaction opportunities were based on the development of oral communication and language practice. Teachers and pupils remarked that interaction contributed to learner motivation and were grateful for the opportunities to practise language and pupils preferred learner-learner interaction rather than when they were directed by teachers (Tognini, 2008).

Although both parties were positive about the opportunities for language practice, teachers recognized the challenges in fostering learner-learner interaction while pupils showed awareness of the difficulties in using the target language during interaction. Tognini (2008) also concluded that

teachers' perceptions were mainly influenced by their experiences and the needs of pupils and not necessarily by theory and research.

Pettit (2008) investigated Mathematics teachers' perceptions about ELLs in mainstream classrooms. The analysis of the data collected through questionnaires and interviews revealed that 86% of the teachers consulted welcomed ELLs in their classroom but 88% thought that the language of Mathematics presented an issue for pupils. This study also highlighted the fact that through professional development opportunities, teachers felt more prepared to teach ELLs.

Pettit (2008) categorized the findings into the need for professional development, language difficulties, modification of work and attitudes towards inclusion. These findings highlighted academic language, in this case, the language of Mathematics as a potential challenge for learners with EAL. Like Pettit (2008), Reeves (2006, p.131) also examined and identified four categories within secondary mainstream teachers' perceptions and found a "neutral to slightly positive attitude" toward the inclusion of ELLs in classrooms. The categories identified by Reeves (2006) are inclusion, coursework modification, professional development and perceptions of language and language learning.

Karabenick and Noda (2004, p.3) investigated teachers' perceptions of ELLs with the aim of developing professional development opportunities for teachers based on the responses gathered through interviews and questionnaires. This study emphasized two perspectives; firstly, attitudes,

beliefs and practices on issues such as whether instruction in a L1 or English is detrimental or beneficial to pupils learning English and secondly, the differences between teachers who were accepting as opposed to those less accepting of pupils learning EAL. Karabenick and Noda (2004) found that teachers generally held positive attitudes and those that did so, had a higher self-efficacy for teaching ELLs.

The findings also point to the need for professional development specific to teaching EAL pupils as even teachers who were confident in their ability to teach most pupils were less confident in teaching pupils with EAL. These findings led to professional development training aimed at enhancing the practices, approaches and strategies used by teachers. Organizing small group work and facilitating learner-learner interaction were strategies that the teachers in Karabenick and Noda's study wanted to build on (Karabenick and Noda, 2004).

The issue of professional development comes across in discussions on EAL with the main points being how and where teachers are given opportunities to enhance their skills and increase their knowledge (Davies, 2012a; Safford and Drury, 2013; Mistry and Sood, 2010). Staff new to teaching frequently bemoans the inadequate preparation specific to EAL in their ITE programmes and this matter has been researched at the national level and is documented by Cajkler and Hall (2009; 2010) who found that overall, while most NQTs have had some introduction to providing for EAL pupils, there

is a lack of focus on specific tasks such as preparation of resources, EAL pedagogy and the integration of new arrivals.

These findings demonstrate the need to focus on areas such as EAL pedagogy, of which interaction during small group work is often cited as one of the strategies to engage EAL learners (Soto Huerta, 2012; Windle and Miller, 2012; Gibbons, 2009). EAL is mentioned in Standard 5 of the new Teachers' Standards which requires all teachers to "use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support" pupils (DfE, 2012, p.8). From personal experience of the school where this research is conducted, experienced staff are challenged by the rising number of NAEP in lessons and the lack of professional development on matters concerning EAL pupils in general.

2.5.4 Pupil perceptions

Pupil perceptions refer to the opinions of pupils about their learning experience, for example, what they learn, how they learn it and their views on tasks and pedagogic approaches (Tse, 2000). Pupil perception is when pupils "express a feeling, make a judgment and a prediction" about a classroom activity (Barkhuizen, 1998, p.6). As Barkhuizen (1998) pointed out, teachers should be encouraged to solicit pupils' perceptions as their views often differ from those of teachers.

Pupil perceptions have been researched from a number of perspectives and for various reasons. Within the sociocultural perspective, the focus on the learner-centred classroom, learner-learner interaction and the active co-

construction of knowledge it has become necessary to gather pupil perceptions about different aspects of their learning experience (Tognini, 2008; Tse, 2000). Tognini (2008) investigated teachers' and learners' perceptions of interaction in languages other than English and found that both groups highlighted the significance of interaction as providing useful opportunities for language practice and as a motivating factor. Pupils also expressed a preference for learner-learner interaction rather than teacher-learner interaction.

Tse (2000) carried out a qualitative study by collecting and analyzing autobiographical data to examine adult learners' perceptions of their foreign language learning experiences specifically on the themes of classroom atmosphere and instruction. To facilitate analysis of the data, participants' responses were categorized into the following areas; classroom interactions, perceived level of success and attribution of success and failure. Some of the positives identified by the pupils include their interactions with teachers and peer group interactions.

Pupils were critical of pedagogy which focused on grammar and vocabulary and bemoaned the lack of oral communication which they felt contributed to their low level of oral proficiency and therefore, their lack of success. Generally, pupils perceived their level of success as relating to their actual proficiency in the language, especially to conversational ability (Tse, 2000, p.12). Some pupils also pointed out that those who achieved greater oral proficiency already had background knowledge or other exposure to the

language which accounted for their success in the foreign language, in this case, Spanish.

Kuo (2011) investigated pupils' perception of learner-learner interaction in a British EFL setting and looked for ways to explain these perceptions to add to our knowledge of the pedagogical strengths and weaknesses of learner interaction. The overall findings suggest that pupils' initial goals and motives shaped their perception of classroom learner-learner interaction. Kuo's (2011) research highlighted strengths and weaknesses of learner-learner interaction in real classroom contexts as pupils expressed positive and negative feelings.

On the positive side, pupils appreciated the increased learner-learner interactive opportunities provided by their participation in oral communication. Pupils were also positive about the intercultural and interpersonal opportunities afforded by interaction with others from different linguistic backgrounds. Some pupils noted that the language used by learners occasionally contained grammatical errors and that it would be better to receive corrective feedback from a more advanced learner.

Alongside general reflections on interaction, Kuo (2011) also solicited pupils' perceptions on classroom activities and tasks. To analyse these responses, Kuo identified the following categories: self-dependent factors, other-dependent factors and context-dependent factors. Self-dependent factors are personal to and come from within the learner, other-dependent factors relate to how other pupils in the classroom contribute to the

discussion while context-dependent factors are issues such as the topic. These factors affect learner performance as well as learner perception of learner-learner interaction in the classroom. An important point made by Kuo (2011) is that group dynamics were seen to have an influence on learner performance which in turn affected learner perception of classroom learner-learner interaction.

McDonough (2004) investigated teachers' and learners' perceptions of pair and small group activity in an EFL context to determine whether the pupils showed improved production of target language forms. Overall, learners showed an improved production of target forms and believed that interaction during small group or pair activities was useful for improving oral communication, however, less so for learning grammar. McDonough (2004, p.17) suggested that teachers seek learners' perceptions about the usefulness of small group activities and explore "whether their perceptions affect immediate performance and/or subsequent learning".

Such discussions might help learners to become aware of how small group activities can support them in achieving lesson objectives. This view is also shared by Mackey (2002) who argued the need to research learners' perceptions in order to supplement researchers' and I would add teachers' views on the usefulness of group activities.

Watanbe (2008, p.4) echoed this sentiment that learners' perceptions about their interactions should not be ignored rather explored to uncover "insights" into their perceptions on pair work. Watanbe's (2008) study

addressed how ESL learners of different proficiency levels interact with each other and how they feel about group work. The participants in the study expressed a preference for collaborative dialogue for the support it provided but did not place much emphasis on the proficiency level of their partner.

The findings (McDonough, 2004; Tognini, 2008; Watanbee, 2008; Kuo, 2011) reviewed here are all related to pupil perception of different aspects of language learning through learner-learner interaction and have been conducted in diverse contexts. Overall, pupils are positive about learner-learner interaction for the increased opportunities to develop oral communication even though it was noted that in some cases, for grammar related tasks, teacher – fronted interaction was preferred. Although not in the area of EAL, the findings of these mainly qualitative studies are relevant and applicable to the context of this research, in particular issues such as learner proficiency and preference for pupil-pupil interaction during small group work.

2.5.5 Teaching assistants' perceptions

TAs make up one-quarter of the total school workforce (DfE, 2009). The increase in the number of TAs working in schools is attributed to a variety of reasons, namely, a National Agreement (DfES, 2003) to raise pupil standards, an attempt to ease teacher workload, an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream education and an increase in funds for staff to support these pupils. This has led to some research on the role of support staff in relation to issues such as inclusion

and teaching and their impact on pupil outcome (Blatchford et al., 2011; Blatchford et al., 2009).

I decided to involve TAs in this research as they have an equally important classroom role in the educational experiences of pupils with EAL and NAEP. TAs are also being given more responsibility for EAL provision and in many schools, are considered one of the major sources of support to NAEP (Davies, 2012b; Driver and Vazquez, 2012). There are few studies particularly focusing on TAs and their views on the educational provision for pupils with EAL. The studies that do involve TAs have been conducted mainly at the primary level, for example, Wardman (2012), Mistry and Sood (2012) and Conteh et al. (2008).

Mistry and Sood (2012) investigated the perspectives, perceptions and experiences of primary school professionals including TAs about the current EAL provisions for monitoring and evaluation. The aim of Mistry and Sood's investigation was to gather insight into the perceptions of current practice in order to identify good practice and to further develop these. The findings identified a structured monitoring system, an awareness and ownership of all staff of this monitoring system and training events for data analysis as opportunities to support EAL provision in primary schools.

Wardman's (2012) study, also at the primary level, compared the interactional opportunities facilitated by specialist language teachers and TAs during withdrawal teaching sessions. The findings revealed significant differences between the approaches taken by the specialist teachers and the

TAs. It was found that the teachers placed more emphasis on engaging learners at the start of the session and used extended questioning techniques to encourage higher order thinking and scaffolding. This study by Wardman (2012) recognized the need for professional development for TAs.

By including TAs in this research, I am giving a much needed voice to other staff directly involved in the education of NAEP. In the school context of this research, the TAs play a vital role in the support of NAEP and are involved in the initial assessment and induction procedures.

This literature review has shown that there is need for research on the experiences of NAEP in mainstream lessons. The areas of interaction and the role of small group work have been significantly studied from a second / foreign language learning perspective but less so in contexts with NAEP simultaneously learning English and curriculum content.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of teachers, TAs and pupils about small group work for NAEP. Additionally, I wanted to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by NAEP as they participate in interactive tasks during small group work. To do this, the following questions were formulated.

2.6 Research Question

The overarching question for this research is:

“What are the perceptions of teachers, teaching assistants and pupils about small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils?”

The following questions will help to answer this and I will explain the theoretical background to the research questions.

Question 1

1. What are teachers’ perceptions about the inclusion of newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons?

In the UK, official guidelines dictate that pupils identified as having EAL should be educated in mainstream lessons alongside their same age peers (Ofsted, 2012). The understanding is that language acquisition should happen in mainstream lessons and that EAL pupils are the responsibility of all subject teachers (Creese, 2010; Leung, 2009). Subject teachers should therefore take responsibility for the language and content development of every pupil.

Government guidelines also state that whenever pupils are withdrawn from mainstream lessons for small group teaching, the “class teacher should be

involved in all the planning” (Ofsted, 2012, p. 4). In this research context, NAEP are supported in both mainstream lessons and withdrawal groups but the focus of the research takes place in mainstream lessons. The responses for this research question will be gathered from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

Question 2

2. What are teachers’ perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?

I am interested in how teachers perceive a particular aspect of their classroom practice, namely, the use of small group work with NAEP. A review of the research on teachers’ perceptions of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons conducted by Pettit (2008), Tognini (2008) and Reeves (2006) found that teachers’ perceptions were mostly influenced by the experiences and needs of pupils. This research question seeks to uncover teachers’ perceptions about the usefulness of small group work, the challenges and opportunities that it could provide to NAEP.

Question 3

3. What are teaching assistants’ perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?

In the context of the present research, TAs play a significant role in the academic and social life of NAEP. The perceptions of TAs are valuable to this research because they are often the first port of call for NAEP, their families and their induction in the school. This is not unusual as documented by Davies (2012b) and Driver (2012) in their report on the role of TAs and EAL pupils. Although TAs are not involved in lesson planning, they are nevertheless called upon to support the learning of pupils during small group activities within mainstream lessons and will provide a valuable perspective about small group work for NAEP.

Question 4

4. What are EAL pupils' perceptions about small group interaction?

Barkhuizen (1998) encourages classroom practitioners to solicit the views of pupils as their perceptions about their teaching and learning experiences often differ from those of their teachers. Within the sociocultural domain, pupil perceptions on, for example, pedagogical approaches and pupil-pupil interaction have been researched.

In both Tse's (2000) and Tognini's (2008) study, pupils expressed a preference for pupil-pupil interaction. I am interested in the perceptions of pupils because they are at the receiving end of our practices and as such, their perceptions should be gathered, explored and where possible, acted upon in order to ensure that their linguistic, academic and social needs are being met.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

These questions are a result of my experience working with NAEP and identify my position as a researcher. The theory underpinning these research questions is the view that small group work and the interaction it fosters supports the language development of pupils with EAL (Gagné and Parks, 2013; Graf, 2011; Gibbons, 2009; Tognini, 2008). Group work aims to be inclusive and promotes sociocultural integration. I am seeking to answer the four questions highlighted above and have identified a case study to examine my work context.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

“It helps because if you do something wrong, mistake, they can correct you. They also maybe can advise you and give you some ideas.” (Year 7 pupil from Sweden)

3.1 Introduction

This is a case study of the perceptions of NAEP, teachers and TAs about small group work in mainstream lessons in one secondary school. In this Chapter, I will explain how this study was carried out, outline the research orientation, describe the data collection instruments and say why these were considered suitable for this research. The context of the research including the participants will be discussed and I will explain the theory underpinning the research questions and the steps taken to answer these.

The many twists and turns of my investigation influenced and shaped my thoughts and professional practice and helped me to gain further insight in the research field. This research is tied to my professional life and deep interests which compelled me to search for information and content in this area. Throughout the process of defining my area of research, there was a simultaneous search of how to present what I wanted to study and the findings of the ensuing investigation.

“Research is, by definition, a search for form quite as much – and at the same time – as it is a search for ‘content’ or knowledge to report” (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002)

3.2 Research Design

In the area of additional language learning, the need for more classroom based studies focusing on the experiences and perceptions of both learners and teachers has been documented (Foley et al, 2013; Mady, 2012; Anderson, 2009; Leung, 2009; van Lier, 2005). This research which takes place in one school is an attempt in this direction and will consider NAEP who are being educated in their natural classroom setting. The study of pupils in their natural learning context is ideal as one is researching aspects of learning in a situation in which they are accustomed.

This is reminiscent of the idea that language is socially constructed through and in interaction with others, a principle of sociocultural theory which is based on Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1986) and discussed in the literature review. In this representation of language, language is seen as social practice which means that language learning is not just about the structure and form but the development of linguistic, cultural and communicative competence in and through interaction with others. Language is not just something to learn but something to participate in and to contribute to (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

The research design is qualitative in nature and the data collection instruments were a questionnaire, focus group discussions with pupils and semi-structured interviews with teachers and TAs. An analysis of key documents, namely the schools EAL policy (Appendix 1) and supporting government guidelines will add to the data. The purpose behind using

different sources was to gather multiple perspectives to understand the situation from different angles or points of view. A qualitative study can relate how an event, a context or a situation is perceived from the point of view of the person providing the account. The qualitative researcher is interested in people, context and the meanings given to interactions or interplay in specific situations (Croker, 2009; Silverman, 2006).

As the researcher, I am interested in the participants; the pupils and staff and the situation in which learning and teaching take place. Qualitative research is based in the natural context of the participants and the information gathered from them should lead to a greater understanding of their situation (Casanave, 2010; Richards, 2009). The responses that the participants give in interviews and questionnaires show how they perceive and interpret their situation, their particular and unique situation (Casanave, 2010; Merriam, 1998). In this research, the responses that the participants give to questions and statements about the role of small group work will show their perceptions and how they view their experiences.

The findings of the research will contribute to our understanding of the needs and optimal learning conditions for EAL pupils and provide evidence to substantiate arguments in favour of the use of small group work as a strategy. While the research is important to the researcher, it must also be of interest to others and contribute to the body of research in the field (Casanave, 2010). In this case, to the growing body of research in EAL (Arnot et al., 2014; Wallace, 2014; Costley, 2014).

To furnish answers to the research questions, data was gathered using two online questionnaires; one for teachers (Appendix 2) and one for TAs (Appendix 3). The questionnaires were completed by 19 teachers and 3 TAs. Data was also collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers, 2 TAs and with 13 NAEP in two focus group interviews. Information was collected from different sources in order to gain multiple perspectives to understanding the situation and as Silverman (2006) suggests, adding to the validity. I decided to gather data using semi-structured interviews with mainstream teachers and TAs, questionnaires to teachers and TAs and focus group discussions with groups of pupils because I found these instruments more suited to the participants of the study.

Researchers are advised to be sensitive to the needs of the participants and it was my desire to be as unobtrusive as possible and to cater to the needs of the participants (Casanave, 2010). From my insider position, I know that the pupils who would provide data in particular would feel comfortable if they were not being interviewed on their own but in a group. The advantages and disadvantages to this and the other data collection instruments will be discussed in a later section.

This research was undertaken in a secondary comprehensive school in the West Midlands and a more detailed examination of the context of the school will follow. The focus of the study was the perceptions of NAEP, teachers and TAs about small group work. It was convenient for me to undertake the research in this setting because I work at the school and have access to the

pupils and staff. Mercer (2007) exemplifies how the use and exposition of one's place of work, translated into formal studies has led to the increase in the pursuit of postgraduate doctoral programmes by teachers studying part-time and using their place of work as a research site.

I am a full time teacher at the school; I am an insider-researcher, defined as someone who studies a group to which they belong (Breen, 2007). This position gave me the grounds from which I could better interpret the perceptions of teachers, TAs and pupils. I am a part of their institution and have a "lived experience" of the situation under study (Mercer, 2007, p.3). This position as teacher-researcher means that I am privy to insider information which, as some suggest, could render my views more subjective (Robson, 2011). This insider-researcher position though could equally add to the credibility of the research through the depth and detail of the interpretation of the findings that as a member of staff at the school, I can provide through my intimate knowledge of the institution, its staff and pupils.

As I go through the process of conducting the case, I am uncovering not only how to conduct a case study but more importantly, how pupils and staff perceive small group work in mainstream lessons for NAEP and how to "stand back" and provide a critical view of the situation and using the information disclosed by staff and pupils during the interviews and focus group discussions. Only by being critical, will I be able to provide a clear

view of the situation and offer credible recommendations arising from the findings.

A challenge to conducting insider - research is distancing oneself from the emerging findings, presenting the data as it was recorded and using all the information gathered to answer the research questions and to highlight issues not previously considered (Breen, 2007). The advantage to this is that through my familiarity with the culture and day to day happenings of the study context, I am in a position to elucidate and present the situation through analysing the responses provided by staff and pupils. So, although I have a “lived experience” of the situation, I have to know how to step aside and examine the responses given by staff and pupils about small group work for NAEP in mainstream lessons so that a true portrayal of the situation is realized (Breen, 2007, p.3). This will be explored further in this chapter.

3.3 Case Study

Case studies are in the naturalistic research paradigm and focus on meaning in context. A case study approach is considered ideal for this study as the focus is on one institution with my interest centered on understanding a situation in this context which is dependent on the context (Casanave, 2010). According to Merriam (1998), case study research encompasses the discovery, insight and understanding from the perspective of those being studied.

Ohta (2001), van Lier (2005) and Duff (2008) presented arguments for using case studies in SLA research because there is a need for an in-depth

investigation of the participants and how they interact and learn within their educational context. Mackey and Gass (2005) assert that for second language researchers the main motivation for using a naturalistic classroom research is to observe and to describe teaching and learning as they occur in intact classes and this was my intention. With the focus on a specific group or situation in their natural setting, case studies provide a framework for the interpretation of experiences shared amongst members of a group. Cohen and Manion (2007, p.170) state that a case study is “an investigation into a specific instance or phenomenon in its real-life context”.

The pupils and staff who make up this research are studied in their day to day setting and I am investigating a particular aspect of their everyday educational experience. Case studies could give a voice to participants’ perspectives and in the present research, a voice to NAEP, their teachers and TAs. A case can be identified as a pupil, a class, a school community or even a particular programme or activity (Hood, 2009; Simons, 1996). This then makes the case, “an object to be studied” (Stake, 1995, p.14).

3.3.1 The case

The case that I am examining consists of newly arrived members of the EAL pupil population, mainstream teachers and TAs at a secondary comprehensive school. When contextual conditions assume great importance, then a case study approach might be appropriate (Mckay, 2006). In this study, the natural context for the pupils, teachers and TAs is their school environment and their daily classroom activities. Another feature of a case study, according to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) is that it

seeks to understand participants' perceptions of events and this is the focus of this present research.

This research is naturalistic as I wish to gather information on an existing situation without an actual intervention in the teaching and learning process but through gathering the perspectives of the participants in the process (Gass and Mackey, 2007). The need for research focused on learners themselves, their perceptions and experiences in multilingual mainstream educational settings has been identified (Shoba, 2013; Kramsch, 2009).

In my particular case, I am motivated by my pupils and how they cope with and in their diverse linguistic, social and cultural realities. The lack of research on pedagogical practices in the field of EAL has been noted by Shoba (2013), Demie (2013) and Andrews (2009) and it is hoped that this research will contribute to the growing body of knowledge surrounding EAL pupils in mainstream lessons.

Through working and interacting with pupils who have EAL, I have been inspired to reflect on the challenges created by the diversity of learners and the increasing need to meet the language needs of learners in mainstream lessons. I have identified an aspect or issue within my profession that I would like to explore and one that was prompted by a critical reflection of the changing population of the classes that I teach. I have what Stake (1995) calls an "intrinsic" interest in the case which enabled me to, over a period of time formulate the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions about the inclusion of newly arrived pupils in mainstream lessons?
2. What are teachers' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?
3. What are TAs' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?
4. What are EAL pupils' perceptions about their involvement in small group interaction?

3.4 Research Context

In this section, I will describe the state secondary school where this research takes place and explain the changes that have occurred at the school from 2003-2012. This period is significant because a decline in pupil numbers and the opening of newly constructed academies nearby meant that fewer pupils were enrolling at the school which resulted in available places. NALDIC (2014) has noted that there are fewer EAL pupils in academies and converter academies than in LA maintained schools.

The school experiences a student turnover rate of 22.5% compared to the Local Authority (LA) average of 7.7% (Ofsted, 2011). Through the drive to improve standards at the school, several initiatives were introduced during the 2010-2012 academic years. Two of these were the "Literacy Initiative"

and a focus on differentiation through the use of grouping strategies to foster interaction, talk and collaborative learning in mainstream lessons. This affected the teaching and learning experiences of NAEP because of the increased emphasis on working together, interacting and learning from and with other pupils.

For pupils, The “Literacy Initiative” entailed involvement in activities geared towards the enrichment of listening, speaking and reading in particular. As part of a group, pupils participated in debates, group presentations in mainstream lessons and reading events. Through differentiation, the individual needs, weaknesses and strengths of pupils were considered during the planning and implementation of group tasks. NAEP were therefore enveloped in a context where language and literacy were being catered to through a variety of language focused activities which took place during interaction with fellow learners in small groups in mainstream lessons across the curriculum.

3.4.1 School context

This research takes place in an 11-18 state comprehensive school in East Birmingham. At the time of this research, the pupil population had fallen to 650 pupils. Over the last 10 years, the school has undergone a number of changes, including four head teachers, two name changes and a change of site into refurbished buildings. The school experiences frequent mid-term admissions, high mobility figures and a rapidly changing pupil profile.

Unfortunately too, there is a huge staff turnover and this fact is mentioned because I believe that it has an impact on the continuity of the educational experiences and opportunities afforded to pupils. The closure of the sixth form also had an impact on staffing. At the start of the 2011-2012 academic year, there were 83 teachers but with the announcement of the closure of the sixth form in January 2012, 11 teachers left to work elsewhere. In April of the academic year 2012-2013, 30 teachers were made redundant and of the 42 remaining teachers, only 36 were present when data was collected.

During the 2006-2008 academic years, the Ethnic Minority and Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU) of the Local Authority (LA) organized training workshops in EAL for all mainstream teachers at the school. This was followed by a member of staff from each department attending a 5 days teacher development course on language in learning across the curriculum. However, staff who received this training no longer works at the school.

Due to cuts in services, the EMPSU of the LA no longer exists and since September 2011, there has not been any professional development support from the LA. NALDIC (2011) warned that the cutback in spending would have serious consequences on the provisions that schools would be able to make for EAL pupils. NALDIC maintains that EAL learners “require additional and clearly defined funding” as they develop proficiency in English (NALDIC, 2011, p. 1).

The make-up of the school’s pupil population underwent and continues to undergo a marked change during the period of the study. New arrivals are

frequently admitted to the school leading to a rapid change in its linguistic landscape. Information about pupils' linguistic and ethnic backgrounds and previous education is collected at the admissions interview. Between September 2012 and July 2013, for example, 133 NAEP joined the school; 4 in KS 4 and 129 in KS 3. Table 1 shows the number of NAEP joining the school from September 2006 to July 2013. Table 2 shows the breakdown of L1s of NAEP as identified by parents or guardians for the academic year 2012-2013.

Table 1: Intake of newly arrived pupils from September 2006 to July 2013

Month	September 2006 - July 2007	September 2007 - July 2008	September 2008 - July 2009	September 2009 - July 2010	September 2010 - July 2011	September 2011 - July 2012	September 2012 - July 2013
September	1	2	19	18	22	36	41
October			2		1	1	16
November			2	1	7	2	19
December			1	1		1	9
January				3	5	6	8
February					4	1	10
March			3	2	3	3	15
April				1			3
May			2				3
June			3	2		1	7
July					1		2
Total	1	2	32	28	43	51	133

Table 2: First languages of newly arrived pupils

Language	Code	Number of pupils		Language	Code	Number of pupils
Amharic	AMR	1		Oromo		1
Arabic	ARA	11		Pahari	PHR	1
Bengali	BNG	8		Panjabi	PNJ	12
Bengali (Sylheti)	BNGS	3		Panjabi (Mirpuri)	PNJM	3
Bosnian	SCBB	2		Polish	POL	2
Czech	CZE	1		Portuguese	POR	4
Chinese	CHIA	2		Pashto	PAT	25
Danish	DAN	3		Romanian	ROM	6
Dutch	DUT	15		Russian	RUS	1
Farsi/Persian	PRSA	3		Shona	SHO	3
Filipino	TGFL	2		Somali	SOM	67
French	FRN	4		Spanish	SPA	4
Hindi	HIN	1		Swedish	SWE	12
Hungarian	HNG	4		Tamil	TAM	1
Italian	ITA	2		Tigrinya	TIG	2
Kurdish	KUR	8		Thai	THA	1
Lingala	LIN	3		Turkish	TUR	1
Lithuanian	LIT	1		Urdu	URD	31
Nepali	NEP	2		Wolof	WOL	1
Norwegian	NOR	4				

The codes used to indicate L1 are those utilised by Birmingham City Council on their 2009 ethnic monitoring form (Appendix 11) (Birmingham City Council, 2009). At the time of writing, there was no code for Oromo. Table 3 shows the countries of origin of pupils. The country of origin with the highest number of pupils is The Netherlands with 32 pupils, followed by Pakistan and Somalia with 30 pupils each. When examining both tables, the countries of origin do not necessarily correlate with the L1. For example, there are pupils who were born in Sweden and have Swedish nationality but Somali is considered their L1. Likewise, there is one pupil whose country of origin is France but whose L1 is Tamil.

In many ways, this has brought positive results to the school community which now has a multicultural pupil population. Research in settings such as the one described here and in particular with secondary aged pupils is significant and necessary to the growing body of literature in bi/multilingualism and additional language learning (Shoba, 2013; Andrews, 2009).

Table 3: Country of origin of pupils

Country	Number of pupils		Country	Number of pupils
Afghanistan	20		Nepal	2
Austria	1		Netherlands	32
Bangladesh	6		Norway	6
Belgium	3		Palestine	1
Croatia	1		Pakistan	30
Czech Republic	1		Philippines	2
Denmark	14		Poland	2
Egypt	1		Portugal	5
Eritrea	7		R.D.C. (Congo)	4
Ethiopia	1		Romania	8
Finland	1		Russia	1
France	1		Saudi Arabia	2
Gambia	1		Somalia	30
Germany	2		Spain	3
Ghana	1		Sudan	1
Hong Kong	2		Sweden	18
Hungary	4		Switzerland	2
India	2		Thailand	1
Iraq	5		Turkey	1
Italy	2		Yemen	4
Latvia	1		Zambia	1
Lithuania	1		Zimbabwe	4
			Total	238

The intake of pupils from September 2006 to July 2013 is examined to contextualize and provide a deeper understanding of the situation under which the teachers, TAs and pupils in this school which makes up the case study find themselves. This research took place during the period September 2011 to July 2013 which is also when the highest numbers of NAEP enrolled. For every month of the 2012 to 2013 academic year there were new arrivals to the school (see Table 1, p. 70). In October and November of 2012, there were 16 and 19 new arrivals respectively whereas in March 2013, there were 15. The numbers in this table attest to the rapid rise in NAEP in mainstream lessons.

A further examination of Table 1 shows that the largest numbers of new arrivals appear in September and this pattern is consistent over the years. These figures represent pupils who are starting their first UK school and in the majority of cases, have little or no English. The weekly mid-term arrival of pupils presents a concern for mainstream teachers who are required to cater to the needs of every pupil in their lesson. The following comment by teacher 3 helps to convey this feeling,

“The main challenge I face with newly arrived EAL pupils is building a lesson which meets their needs, as well as meeting the needs of the other students in the group. I am often concerned about 'singling them out' in a way which would isolate them and make them feel different. However this may mean that newly arrived EAL students are not making sufficient progress in my lessons.” (Teacher 3, section E of the Questionnaire)

The illustration (Page 70) of the rising numbers of NAEP enrolling at the school can help to explain the challenges faced by teaching and support staff

as they endeavour to create educational opportunities. Apart from the challenges faced by teachers, pupils too encounter their share of difficulties in mainstream classrooms. During the focus group discussion, pupil C alluded to not being considered part of a group if she was unable to contribute,

“You feel better cause like when the teacher say you have to do something, you do it with other people and they explain. But sometimes, I try and if I don’t try, they say “oh, she doesn’t know the work” and don’t write my name. (Pupil C, Focus Group Discussion)

In agreement, pupil A states “Yeah, I don’t like that.” (Pupil A, Focus Group Discussion)

Further on, pupil E expresses similar concerns regarding the perception that other learners have of them if they are unaware of the subject content and are unable to produce work,

“If you are in one group and you don’t know anything and the others know, they just gonna tell the teacher and say she not speaking, she not writing, she not done anything.” (Pupil E, Focus Group Discussion)

3.5 The EAL Department and EAL Provision at the School

At present the school ensures support for EAL pupils by placing TAs in mainstream English, Mathematics and Science. There is also an induction class for pupils without formal education or who spent significant periods outside of formal schooling before joining the school. In the UK, government guidelines state that the withdrawal of EAL learners from a lesson should be for a limited period of time and that the work done in withdrawal groups should be linked to the mainstream lesson (Wardman, 2012; Pim, 2012).

Since September 2011, the EAL department has been working much closer with subject teachers in order to integrate curricula content with the language taught during withdrawal group sessions for NAEP as advised by government documents (Ofsted, 2012c). The EAL department also provides homework support and after school lessons in English grammar and examination techniques.

On entry to the school, except for those newly arrived to the country and completely new to English, each pupil is assessed and assigned a level in listening, speaking, reading and writing following the level descriptors of A Language in Common (QCA, 2000). The purposes of assessing pupils are to ascertain their current level of proficiency in English language, to diagnose and analyse their needs in order to provide targeted support and to provide baseline information for school statistics and monitoring purposes. NAEP with little or no English receive an hour of intensive English lessons each day and are then in mainstream lessons alongside their year group peers for the remainder of the day.

3.5.1 Whole – school literacy initiative

At the time of this research, the school was implementing whole school literacy strategies in response to recent government initiatives to improve the literacy skills of pupils. This government initiative is set out in the document “Moving English Forward” (Moving English Forward, Ofsted 2012) which addresses the importance of English and literacy skills to pupils’ learning across the curriculum. From the “Moving English Forward” document, one of the recommendations for secondary schools is

that they should endeavour to “strengthen whole-school literacy work across all departments to ensure that students extend and consolidate their literacy skills in all appropriate contexts” (Moving English Forward, Ofsted 2012, p. 7). Building on this is the new Teachers’ Standards (2012) which requires all teachers to “demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of Standard English.”

In response to these Government policies, two practical measures taken by the school were to focus on structured small group work in mainstream lessons and reading groups which are mentioned here because group work is the focus of this research and in the focus group discussions, pupils make reference to reading. In these reading groups, pupils met weekly to read and to discuss a particular book.

Small group work was encouraged as a means of differentiating learning and teaching tasks and was promoted in all subject disciplines. Additionally, there was an emphasis on oracy and public speaking and all pupils were encouraged to participate in inter-house and inter-form debates. This is the context surrounding the participants and the situation of the school at the time that this research was conducted.

3.5.2 Small group composition in mainstream lessons

The initiative to institute small group work as a feature of mainstream classrooms and as a means of including all pupils was implemented by the school’s management who then directed teaching staff to organize groups

within their curriculum areas. To place pupils in groups, teachers are instructed to use data made available by the school to compose groups within their mainstream lessons. The data available to teaching and support staff includes KS 2 levels (where available) in English, Mathematics and Science, Special educational needs details (if any) pupils in receipt of Free School Meal, ethnicity, home language and date of birth. Also available are pupils' reading ages which are measured using "Star Reading" assessment which is an assessment of reading and comprehension skills which gives an initial reading level (Renaissance Learning, 2014). Another set of data is provided through the CAT4 Cognitive Ability Tests results and according to their website:

"CAT4 assesses a pupil's ability to reason with and manipulate different types of material through a series of Verbal, Non-Verbal, Quantitative and Spatial Ability tasks. Together, these four tests provide teachers with a comprehensive profile of a pupil's reasoning abilities, and as such the core abilities related to learning.

The resulting data can then be used to identify a pupil's strengths, weaknesses and learning preferences, providing accurate and reliable information that is essential for personalised learning. The more we know about a pupil, the better position we should be in to offer a learning environment and ways of teaching and learning that allow pupils to maximise their potential. Information about a pupil's reasoning ability will be key to many decisions and should be considered alongside attainment data and other factors known to impact on learning, such as attendance and attitude." (GL Assessment, www.gl-assessment.co.uk. 2014)

There are several issues of great importance to be gathered from the data that teachers use to compose groups and by which all pupils are judged. Firstly, the school where this research is based has a large intake of post KS 2 pupils who often arrive mid-year with little or no English and no KS 2 results. Secondly, on the morning that pupils begin life at their new school, they are required to sit both the CAT4 and Star Reading. The results of these assessments are then made available to staff so even before mainstream teachers have met these pupils face to face, they are able to form an impression based on a set of data. The data is also used to generate a timetable for pupils.

Lastly and perhaps the most alarming concern is that these tests are evidently administered in English which makes it unsurprising that pupils with little or no English have restricted access to the tests and lack the ability to achieve a score in line with their cognitive ability. Within mainstream lessons, groups in which pupils are placed to work are dependent on each teacher's perception and interpretation of the data, how teachers decide on and judge the most appropriate way to use available data and to suit the curriculum content and teaching and learning styles. It is not mandatory that pupils work in the same groups in each curriculum subject.

3.6 Research Instruments

The instruments used to obtain data are two parallel questionnaires sent to teachers and TAs, semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers and TAs and focus group discussions. The school's EAL policy and

government documents concerning inclusion and support procedures for EAL pupils were also examined to identify the extent to which staff, through their practices were upholding and adhering to these.

3.6.1 Documentary analysis

Documents can be used to support the analysis of issues in a case study and can shed light on the context and background of the research and the teaching and learning situation of staff and pupils (Simons, 2009). The school's EAL policy which draws from government documents was examined to add depth to the research context. Moreover, an analysis of this document can be compared with other data sources. To analyse the document, I will identify the statements relevant to inclusion and teaching strategies such as the use of small group work for EAL pupils. I will demonstrate where these are reflected in practice by examining and comparing the data gathered from interviews and questionnaires.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

The questionnaires (Appendices 2 and 3) used were designed by the researcher based on information gathered from the literature review and a questionnaire on a similar theme constructed by Pettit (2008). Pettit's (2008) questionnaire was used to gather the perceptions of teachers of Mathematics about the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream Mathematics lessons. The questionnaire designed for this research differs from Pettit's (2008) as it was constructed to gather the perceptions of mainstream teachers of various subject disciplines.

The questionnaire is seen as a quick and effective way of gathering information from a group of people and although often viewed as straightforward and easy to construct, one should be careful when writing and compiling questions so as to ensure clarity and to avoid ambiguity (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010). A questionnaire should provide answers that are adequately reliable and valid and with those constructed for a specific research purpose such as the one used in this study, the researcher should take care with the internal consistency of the items.

Internal consistency means that the items of the questionnaire should produce similar results and should correlate with each other which can be done by including both positive and negative items (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010, p.93). To ensure internal consistency of the items, some of the steps taken included making the statements short, clear and unambiguous and reverse scoring the negatively worded items.

I decided to administer a web-based questionnaire to reach the cohort of teachers and TAs at the school because I felt that it would take a shorter turnaround time, the data could be easily imported into data analysis programmes if necessary and also because there would not be a cost involved (Archer, 2008). A web-based questionnaire has its strengths and limitations. One limitation is that not everyone might have online access but this was not the case in this research as all teachers and TAs have a school-based email.

The email addresses are standardized with the first name and surname of every member of staff. Still, the decision not to respond may be made rather quicker than with a paper questionnaire. In other words, it might be easier to quickly dismiss a web-based questionnaire (Archer, 2008). An advantage to using an online questionnaire is that reminders and follow-ups are straightforward (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010).

3.6.2.1 Questionnaire design

In order to construct the questionnaire, I began by noting items from the literature review and by examining other questionnaires on similar topics (Pettit, 2008; Reeves, 2006; Karabenick and Noda, 2004). It was a challenge to narrow the focus of the questionnaire items so that they would reflect the research focus. I went through a process of examining the research ideas and questions and considering the context of the participants and then writing and re-writing the questionnaire items.

Some of the questionnaire items, in particular, section one, were influenced by discussions I had with mainstream teachers before formal data collection began. To encourage the target audience to respond, I tried to ensure that the questionnaire was not too long and that the items could be easily read and understood as suggested by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) and Cohen and Manion (2007). The paper versions of the questionnaire were made into electronic ones (Appendices 2 and 3) which were sent by email to all the teachers and TAs employed at the school in April 2013.

3.6.2.2 Questionnaire items

Both the teacher and TA questionnaires are divided into 5 sections. The purpose of Section A is to collect biographical information about the participants to allow the researcher to group the responses from teachers and TAs by gender, subjects taught and number of years in the role. Section B, elicits information about the perceptions that teachers hold about the inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons and is relevant in answering the first research question. Section B contains 8 statements which focus on teachers' perceptions which have been found to influence their self-efficacy in teaching pupils new to English (Reeves, 2006). Section C is specifically about the role and value to EAL pupils of small group work in mainstream lessons and will seek answers to the second and third research questions.

In this section as well, the perceptions of TAs are relevant because they provide support in mainstream lessons and are often required to work with small groups of pupils. Section D looks at the challenges and opportunities faced by pupils during small group work. Section E comprises 3 open questions and I decided to include open questions following the recommendation by Gillham (2008) that by doing so, respondents will see that their views are important. Open questions also give respondents an opportunity to add detail or expand on a point that was not mentioned through the other types of questions (Gillham, 2008).

The statements of the questionnaire were designed to focus on the following points; the perception of the inclusion of EAL learners in mainstream

lessons, the role and value of small group work and the role of interaction during small group work. The wording of some statements reflects the role of the respondent, for example, Statement 3 of Section B where teaching assistants and mainstream teachers are used accordingly. To facilitate analysis, the findings from each section of the questionnaire will be categorized and discussed under themes.

3.6.3 Focus group

A focus group discussion is a method of obtaining qualitative information and is used to gather further knowledge about a topic. The participants “share characteristics” relevant to the issues of the research (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.114) and interact with each other during the discussion. The issues of this research concern pupils working in small groups within mainstream lessons and the participants of the focus group are all members of small groups in their timetabled subjects.

The strength of using focus groups to gather data lies in the fact that the researcher is able to bring together a specifically chosen group to focus on a particular issue and a noted disadvantage is that focus groups tend to produce less data which may be difficult to analyse and sometimes the participants stray from the topic (Edley and Litosseliti, 2010).

Basit (2010) pointed out that focus groups are useful to generate ideas and equally advises on the need to ensure that all participants are given an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. I chose to gather feedback by using focus groups for the following reasons. Firstly, to encourage

participation from pupils who would otherwise be reluctant to express themselves in one-to-one interviews. Secondly, to encourage participation from pupils who feel they have nothing to contribute but would engage in a discussion generated by other group members such as same-age peers.

A disadvantage of using focus groups is the difficulty of “ensuring the neutrality of the interviewer” and the method of doing this is by “eradicating leading or ambiguous questions” as pointed out by Edley and Litosseliti (2010, p.158). Other disadvantages of using focus groups are that firstly, participants may have less time to share their views and secondly, one might be influenced by the opinions of others. Additionally, there is the risk that one or more participants could dominate the discussion (Basit, 2010).

In order to minimize these risks, I discussed the purpose and importance of the focus group with the group of pupils and explained that it was important that I gather the perspectives of different pupils as they were not in the same lessons and would provide different but equally meaningful information. Even considering the disadvantages, if I wanted an impression on whether small group work was providing meaningful opportunities for language development and the types of challenges involved when pupils participate in small group work, then I needed the perceptions of the pupils themselves as they are directly impacted by the strategies and practices that are used in the classroom and for the pupils involved, this was the best method of gathering their perceptions.

Barkhuizen (1998) advised that where possible, the perceptions of pupils should be solicited as they offer another perspective on an issue. So, bearing this in mind and with the knowledge that pupils were in an atmosphere where they were expected to interact and collaborate with peers in a small group setting, I considered it important to gather a picture of the view that pupils themselves hold of this experience. I hoped to identify the perceptions that pupils have of small group work, their experiences, the challenges as faced and identified by pupils and the opportunities encountered. The guide questions were developed based on the information from the review of the literature which advocates small group work as one of the ways in which the language development of NAEP can be catered for (Coelho, 2012; Gravelle, 2005).

3.6.4 Interviews

Gathering data by interviewing teachers and TAs was seen as an ideal opportunity for staff to express their perceptions of classroom events and provide a firsthand account of their experiences teaching and supporting NAEP and their perceptions of pupils' experiences. Conducting interviews is one of the common ways to gather data on participants' perceptions and in this case, has the potential to uncover staffs' opinions about classroom activities (Talmy, 2010; McKay, 2006). As Cohen and Manion (2007, p.349) explained, interviews allow participants to "express how they regard situations from their point of view".

As part of this research, I am seeking the perceptions of staff that, in their daily practice encounters NAEP with little or no English and could provide

insight into the learning opportunities, namely small group work that are offered. An interview has a specific purpose and the purpose of the interviews carried out in this research is to discover the perceptions of pupils, teachers and TAs about small group work for NAEP. To summarize, data was collected using two parallel questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and a documentary analysis of key documents. In the following section, I will explain how I intend to ensure that the research, data gathering instruments and the analysis of the findings is valid and reliable.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

To ensure that the research instruments do what they purport to do and that the study is answering the questions that have been set out, it is necessary to examine the validity and reliability of the data and the data gathering instruments. To be valid signifies that the research is actually measuring what it says it is measuring and it can be addressed by ensuring that there is depth, detail and openness in the reporting of findings with the aim being to “maximize validity” (Cohen and Manion, 2007, p.133).

On the matter of objectivity, Hood (2009) suggests that in an educational setting where the researcher is a teacher and a member of staff, one cannot be an objective observer. In my case, I am a colleague to the teachers and TAs and a teacher to the pupils who are the participants. I am with the people who comprise the case, I acknowledge this insider position and feel privileged to be able to carry out this research with my colleagues and

pupils and I am a “learner in project” as stated by Duff (2008, p.173). Hood (2009, p.71) advises that in such a situation, an attempt to control or to distance oneself from the context and the participants “would decontextualize the case”.

Following this thought, I would not wish to decontextualize the case but to use my position to explore and truthfully present the reality of the situation. Being open and honest to the participants throughout the study, maintaining the integrity of the data collection, analysis and interpretation of findings are ways I can guarantee the credibility of this case study. I am striving towards informed criticality with the judgments and conclusions drawn from the data analysis carefully reasoned within the contextual factors of the study.

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research instruments and whether the same results would be obtained if the research were to be replicated. To ensure reliability, it is advisable to document the steps and procedures employed in a case and to follow a guide when collecting and analyzing data, in other words, the way that data is collected and analyzed must be transparent (Duff, 2008). During the course of this research, I made notes to track the journey and changes made as the research evolved.

3.8 Data Analysis

After the data was collected, the recordings of the interviews and focus groups were transcribed and I went through a process of reading and re-reading the transcripts and the responses to the open questions of the questionnaire. After each reading of the transcripts and questionnaire

responses, I highlighted and wrote down recurring points or anything that had a connection with the research questions or relation to the literature review (Merriam, 1998). To organize the data, I wrote the question number and what I considered the important points from each respondent.

I followed this by making a list of all the points that I had gathered from the scrutiny of the data. Once this was done, I again perused the transcripts and questionnaire responses and made a note of the recurring points. I also wrote down any thoughts or ideas that came to me while I was reading the responses. I could see connections, similarities or links between some of the points. In addition to this, I looked for differences in responses.

The responses of sections, B, C and D of both the teacher and TA questionnaires were put in table form with percentages shown. After reading through all the responses of the interviews and open section of the questionnaire, I checked to see whether there were any links or patterns across different sections of the questionnaire. Cresswell (2011, p. 83) advises a step by step approach to data analysis and highlights the importance of engaging with and reflecting on the data as it emerges.

The responses were then put into categories based on similarities and in some cases differences between answers. These categories were organised into themes or topics which were decided upon based on the recurring points from the participants' responses. These themes became the topics for the discussion and were drawn from the ideas that I could see reflected in the data as well as the research literature (Merriam, 1998). Data gathered

through questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews has to be interpreted and organised into themes and categories (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2007). So, it is the words of the participants that will discuss and answer the research questions.

The approach that I took and as described above is more of an inductive one which seeks to draw conclusions from the evidence which in this case is the data produced by the participants (Silverman, 2011; Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2007). As I read through the data, I wrote down recurring points and I kept looking back at the research questions for further guidance to choosing appropriate themes. Inductive research is described as working from the “bottom up” with the participants’ views used to “build broader themes” (Cresswell and Plano, 2007, p. 23).

This is different from a deductive approach which starts with a general statement or hypothesis for testing rather than exploring a research question and is considered working “top down” (Cresswell and Plano, 2007). Had I taken a deductive approach, I would have started my analysis with expected categories or pre-conceived codes.

A deductive approach builds on results from previous research and I was not using previous research to confirm or reject findings. Even though this was not the case, through my engagement with the research literature, I had formed some expectations as to possible findings. “No matter how inductive, the researcher approaches fieldwork with some orienting ideas, foci and tools” (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 27)

An inductive approach was taken because the answers to the research questions and to the reasons for carrying out the research in the first place was to gather participants' perceptions about the topic of investigation and it is their words that would answer the research questions. The research has a qualitative orientation and answers would be reached through an exploration of the data (Silverman, 2011). Qualitative research is by nature inductive with the answers to research questions drawn from the results and the conclusion based on evidence from the data (Silverman, 2011; Cohen and Manion, 2007).

The way in which data were collected; through interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions meant that responses would need to be ordered in some way before analysis and interpretation (Merriam, 1998). The themes that were extracted from the interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions are consistent with the literature review. The procedure of examining the data as explained above is known as data reduction and is the process of identifying key information from the data collection methods (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Simons, 2009).

Following this, the data were presented in a table which allowed one to observe the initial findings and to decide on the necessary actions for analysis. This step is described as data display and finally, there is conclusion drawing and verification. In this final step, the explanations and answers to the research questions are brought to a conclusion and validated (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Dealing with the data in this systematic gave me a sense of familiarity with the data and after each step (reading, organizing, categorizing), I felt my understanding of what participants had to say gradually increasing. In hindsight, I could have used Nvivo which is a software designed to organize, analyze and share non-numerical data (QSR International, 2015). I am aware of the benefits of using Nvivo but was unable to because of technical difficulties.

From an interpretive perspective, the answers to the research questions are explained from the point of view of those constituting the case and this is the position that I wish to maintain (Merriam, 1998). This differs from the positivist perspective which asserts that the research questions should yield similar results if applied to another case (Cohen and Manion, 2007). Case study research in the area of language acquisition has adopted a subjective and interpretive viewpoint (Duff, 2008). I am listening to and exposing the perceptions of the participants who make up this one particular case.

My reasons for carrying out this research are not just to investigate but to learn about the situation and in so doing to contribute to the growing body of knowledge and literature about EAL. At the same time, I have to be cautious about how my insider role will affect the data collection and the interpretations made (Mercer, 2007). There are advantages and disadvantages to my insider position. I am aware that staff may not welcome the idea that their views are being solicited by a colleague and

might feel that in the reporting of the findings, they could be identified by their answers.

The answers to the questionnaires, focus groups and the semi-structured interviews will be confidential and all paper trail will be locked away in a safe during and after the research. Equally, I am cognizant of the fact that some members of staff might readily offer their assistance by way of completing the questionnaire and being interviewed because they see the necessity for the research and believe that the findings will lead to practical use.

3.9 Participants

3.9.1 Pupils

The pupil participants in this study are 13 KS 3 pupils, 12 of whom at the time of the research were newly arrived to the UK and new to English. A letter (Appendix 4) was sent to 43 NAEP on the school's roll and who had been attending school for less than one academic year. I decided to focus on this group of pupils in particular as they were newly arrived, new to English and attending their first UK school. I wanted the perceptions of this particular group of pupils to determine if and how being part of a small group impacted or enhanced their learning of English.

For NAEP, group work is viewed as "particularly crucial" for being less intimidating and for offering more interaction time in which pupils can collaborate and learn from each other (Cho and Reich, 2008 p.235). The first focus group comprises 6 pupils; 3 from year 7 and 3 from year 8. In

the second focus group, of the 7 pupils, two are in year 7, three are in year 8 and two are year 9 pupils. Pseudonyms will be used throughout and a snapshot of the pupils, their linguistic and educational background is presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Snapshot of pupils from focus group 1

Pupil	Month and year of entry to school	First Language/s	Additional Information
Pupil U (Year 7)	September 2012	Somali	Unable to read or write Somali.
Pupil V (Year 7)	October 2012	Swedish and Somali	Able to read and write Swedish.
Pupil W (Year 8)	October 2012	Bengali	Limited literacy in Bengali
Pupil X (Year 8)	November 2012	Urdu	Limited literacy skills in Urdu
Pupil Y (Year 7)	September 2012	Somali	Unable to read or write Somali
Pupil Z (Year 8)	September 2012	Tamil	Literate in Tamil and French.

Table 5: Snapshot of pupils from focus group 2

Pupil	Month and year of entry to school	First Language/s	Additional Information
Pupil A (Year 8)	November 2013	Romanian	Literate in Romanian
Pupil B (Year 8)	January 2014	Dutch and Twi	Literate in Dutch.
Pupil C (Year 8)	September 2013	Hungarian	Literate in Hungarian
Pupil D (Year 9)	November 2013	Norwegian and Tigrinya	Unable to read or write Tigrinya. Literate in Norwegian.
Pupil E (Year 7)	September 2013	Somali	Unable to read or write Somali
Pupil F (Year 9)	September 2011	English	
Pupil G (Year 7)	November 2013	Arabic	Literate in Arabic

3.9.2 Teachers

I first spoke to the teaching staff about this research and its aims at a staff meeting. After the questionnaire (Appendix 2) was designed, it was emailed to teachers. The email was sent to 36 teachers. The responses were voluntary and anonymous.

3.9.3 TAs

At the time of the research, there were 4 TAs at the school. During a meeting, I explained the nature and purpose of the research and the reason for the questionnaire (Appendix 3) and invited the TAs to take part. They

all agreed to take part by being interviewed and by completing a questionnaire which was emailed to them. The TAs showed enthusiasm for the research and its purposes. As previously mentioned TAs are often the first port of call for NAEP and I was not surprised at their willingness and request to be informed of the outcomes. Their responses were also voluntary and anonymous.

3.10 Procedures

3.10.1 Ethical considerations

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) guidelines were used to inform the ethical procedures and concerns before, during and after the research. This study involved staff, children and parents, all of whom have the right to be anonymous, to choose whether to participate in the study and to withdraw at any time. Out of respect for the participants and to maintain the integrity of the research process, I had to consider issues of consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

The ethical approval process was undertaken to protect these rights, particularly for children and parents with EAL who might be especially vulnerable because of their inexperience in English and the English education system. Ethical approval (Appendix 15) was obtained through the University before I undertook the research.

3.10.2 Consent

Before contacting any participant, I obtained permission from the Head Teacher to conduct this study involving teachers, TAs and pupils. A letter outlining the purpose and motivation of the study (Appendix 5) was presented to the Head Teacher and he gave his consent. With the Head's permission, I contacted teaching staff and TAs to explain the purpose of the study and invited them to participate.

The letter asks these colleagues to opt into the study and assures them of anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time. The opt in strategy may have reduced the number of staff participating because some colleagues did not "find the time" to doing so. However, this meant that these colleagues were volunteers who did not feel coerced. This was followed by a letter (Appendix 6) to the teaching staff and TAs.

The approach to the pupils was also conducted ethically. After sending letters to parents, telephone calls were made to discuss the content of the letter and to check if parents understood why the letters were sent. The researcher only experienced communication difficulties with two Somali speaking parents. Subsequently, a member of the school staff who speaks and understands Somali contacted both parents.

One of the parents requested a meeting with the researcher as he wanted to use this opportunity to give his views as a parent. This request was granted and during the meeting, he gave his formal consent orally and in writing.

Finally, the consent of pupils was sought because although they are not of legal age to give consent, as vulnerable teenagers I felt it was vital for their rights to be respected. I felt it was possible for these pupils to feel they had to participate because of the school setting and so sought their consent. I discussed the study with groups of pupils in their mainstream lessons and asked if they would like to provide their views. I gave them an account (Appendix 14) in writing and a chance to discuss the study before consenting to participate.

3.10.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

The teachers, TAs and pupils were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their contribution would be anonymized and kept confidential. To guarantee this, I ensured that all recordings, transcripts and paper trails were securely stored and that no names were used.

3.10.4 Procedures - Questionnaires

In April 2013, the online questionnaire was sent to every member of the teaching staff and TAs with the hope that there would be a high rate of return and from each curriculum area in order to gather a broad view of how mainstream teachers perceive group work involving EAL pupils and because of the need for the sample to be representative of the teaching staff. This is of great importance because the “strength of the conclusion” depends on how well the sample represented the population of the study (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010). None of the teachers or TAs declined to participate. However, not all completed the questionnaire. One TA was on maternity leave when the questionnaire was administered.

Each time a member of staff completed the questionnaire, an automatic response was sent to my email. I was therefore able to keep a record of the number of persons completing the questionnaire and could also remind staff to complete the questionnaire. Because of financial constraints, in April 2013, 30 employees including 10 teachers learnt that their posts would be made redundant. This may have had an impact on the research in that, as staff morale was low and staff absence was high, I did not feel comfortable reminding teachers to complete the questionnaire.

The fact that I am a member of staff at the school and therefore have immediate access to the daily happenings means that I became involved emotionally. In many ways, I was conscious of the fact that I needed staff to complete the questionnaire but at the same time, I was wary about reminding them especially as the research in itself would be of no direct value to them. This could be perceived as one of the disadvantages of *being in or having a position* in the research site.

It is important to note this because as a case study is concerned with a particular institution and the situation at the school at the time when data was being collected could influence the views and perceptions of the staff that were, at that time in a vulnerable position (Mercer, 2007). Finally, by the end of June 2013, out of a possible 36 responses, 19 teachers and 3 TAs completed the online questionnaire.

3.10.5 Procedures – Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews with teachers

After the questionnaires were completed, I again contacted the teachers and asked whether anyone would like to be interviewed. After two requests, I was able to interview 10 teachers. The interviews were audio-recorded and conducted in private with only the researcher and the interviewee present.

The following codes T1, T2, T3 up to T10 were assigned to each teacher interviewed. TA 1, TA 2, and TA 3 were assigned to the TAs. The recorded interviews were uploaded on a computer and transcribed. The transcriptions were examined to identify recurring themes that could help to explain the research questions. The following questions were used as a guide for the interview with the teachers:

- 1) Tell me about your experiences with EAL learners in your classroom?
- 2) What types of strategies do you generally use to help students who are not yet proficient in English?
- 3) Do you sometimes plan or organize group work?
- 4) Do you think that working in a group helps some EAL pupils? Why / Why not?
- 5) Do you believe that group work will provide EAL pupils with more opportunities to talk and to develop their skills in English?

- 6) When you plan or organize group work, do you ensure that EAL pupils are able to interact with their other EAL peers?
- 7) When you plan or organize group work, do you ensure that EAL pupils are able to interact with peers who can provide a good model of English?
- 8) Do you believe that such interaction will help pupils to develop their skills in English?
- 9) Do you think that group work is more of a challenge or more of an opportunity for EAL learners?

Thank you very much for your time. Is there anything that you would like to tell me or do you have any question for me?

Semi-structured interviews with TAs

After the questionnaires were completed by the TAs, I contacted them in writing requesting a face to face interview. The following questions were used as a guide:

- 1) Tell me about your experiences with EAL learners in the lessons that you support, in the mainstream lessons that you support?
- 2) As a teaching assistant, what strategies do you normally use to help students who are not yet proficient in English, NAEP with little or no English?

- 3) Do you sometimes work with the mainstream teacher to plan or organize group work?
- 4) Have you been in situations where you see students engaged in group work in a mainstream lesson?
- 5) Do you think that this small group work, do you think that it helps EAL pupils? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- 6) Do you think that peer-peer support is crucial to some EAL students?
- 7) Do you believe that small group work provides EAL pupils with more opportunities to talk and to develop their skills in English?
- 8) If you are in a situation where you have to support small groups within a mainstream lesson, do you ensure that EAL pupils are able to interact with their other EAL peers?
- 9) Do you ensure that EAL pupils are also able to interact with peers who can provide a good model of English?
- 10) Do you believe that interaction helps our EAL pupils to develop their skills in English?
- 11) Do you see group work more as a challenge or as an opportunity?

Thank you for your time. Is there anything that you would like to tell me or do you have any question for me?

3.10.6 Procedures - Focus group discussion

I arranged to meet with the pupils in one of the classrooms where they have mainstream English lessons. This is so that they would be in a familiar environment and would feel more at ease. The pupils are familiar with each other even though they are not all in the same year group and I considered that this would help them to feel comfortable.

After a meeting to give further information and to explain the purpose of the focus group discussion (Appendix 14), pupils were given a date and a time to meet with the teacher-researcher. Guidelines from the literature review (Wallace, 2014; Kaneva, 2012; Windle and Miller, 2012; Soto Huerta, 2012; Gibbons, 2009) helped me to formulate the following questions which were used as a guide for the two focus group discussions:

- 1) Do you enjoying doing group work in lessons?
- 2) What do you enjoy about group work?
- 3) Do you think that you get help from working in a group?
- 4) In what ways do you get help when working in a group?
- 5) Do you find it hard to participate in group work?
- 6) Explain why you find it hard or challenging?
- 7) Do you believe that participating in group work helps you to speak more English?

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

“It is best to do work in a team to bounce your ideas off. Team work is stronger with the right interaction.” (Year 8 pupil from France)

4.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, the findings of the online questionnaires completed by the teachers and the TAs, the semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers and TAs, the focus group discussion with pupils and the analysis of documents are presented.

The responses to the online questionnaire were downloaded as an excel document after which the answers to sections A, B, C and D were placed in separate tables to facilitate analysis by examining and comparing the responses of those surveyed. For each section, the statements and possible responses were coded for organisation and analysis. Appendix 7 has a list of the codes used to identify the responses from sections A, B, C and D of the questionnaire.

For sections B, C and D, for example, 1 was used to denote strongly agree, 2 for agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 disagree and 5 strongly disagree. Section E comprises 3 open questions and a thematic analysis was carried out with the responses to this section. Responses from two other sources of data, namely, the interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. After transcription, the findings were

presented in themes based on similarities in responses. The data collected from the questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions generated different themes which are shown in Appendix 8. A thematic analysis involves looking for patterns or similarities in the responses given by respondents, grouping these under common categories or themes which then become areas for discussion and analysis (Cohen and Manion, 2007).

The data will be analysed to give a picture of the situation surrounding NAEP at the school where this research was undertaken. The key information will be categorised into themes which will form the basis of a discussion. Identifying and then presenting key information, examining this data to uncover answers to the research questions are, according to Miles and Huberman (1984) the steps involved in the analysis of data.

In this chapter, the findings of each data collection method will be presented in relation to the research questions. Points pertinent to the focus of this research, perceptions of small group work for NAEP in mainstream lessons will be highlighted and these will form the discussion of Chapter five.

4.2 TA Questionnaire – Return rate

At the time of the research, there were 4 TAs employed at the school but one was on maternity leave when the questionnaires were administered therefore only 3 (75%) completed questionnaires were returned. Of the 3 TAs, there is one male who indicated that he has been working as a TA for 6-10 years and 2 females who both state that they have been in this role for 3-6 years. The TA questionnaire was completed in March 2013.

4.3 Teacher Questionnaire - Return rate

The questionnaire was sent by email to every member of the teaching staff in March 2013. Shortly after, several teachers received news that they would be made redundant and this may have had an impact on the return rate as some teachers decided to take a leave of absence. Out of a possible 36 returns, 19 (52%) questionnaires were completed and returned.

4.4 Findings from the Teacher Questionnaire

4.4.1 Section A

The first question of Section A of the teacher questionnaire revealed that, of the respondents, 4 or 21% are males and 15 or 79% are females. As noted before, at the time when the data was collected, there were 36 teachers, 15 male and 21 female. Of the 15 male members of staff, only 4 or 26% completed the questionnaire while of the 21 females, 15 or 71% completed the questionnaire. The number of female teachers who completed the questionnaire is more than 3 times higher than the number of males. For Question 3, respondents were required to indicate the number of years they had spent in their respective roles and for the final question the subject/s taught. Table 6 shows the number of years in role of teacher respondents.

Table 6: Number of years in role - teacher respondents

Years in role	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 (1-2 years)	5	26.3	26.3	26.3
2 (3-6 years)	4	21.1	21.1	47.4
Valid 3 (7-10 years)	3	15.8	15.8	63.2
4 (more than 10 years)	7	36.8	36.8	100.0
Total	19	100.0	100.0	

7 teachers or 36.8% of those sampled have been teaching for 3-10 years, another 7 teachers or 36.8% had been teaching for more than 10 years while the second highest percentage, 26.3% or 5 teachers, is made up of teachers either in their first or second year of teaching and in the context of the school where this research was undertaken are either trainees or NQTs in the Teach First programme.

In England, Teach First is one of the routes to gaining qualified teacher status and trainees are usually placed in challenging schools in disadvantaged areas (Muijs et al., 2010). For the past decade, the school has faced numerous challenges making it difficult to recruit and retain staff. For the past 7 years, Teach First trainees have been joining the teaching staff. This information regarding the status of the teachers in their first or second year of teaching is based on my position as an “insider” at the research site.

I considered it important for respondents to state the length of time that they had been teaching as their years of experience could have an impact on how

they perceive the inclusion of EAL learners in mainstream lessons and their views about managing learning and teaching in groups with NAEP. The third question asks for the subject/s taught by each respondent. Some teachers, for example, respondent 11, included subjects that he/she previously taught.

The respondents were from a range of curriculum areas with 4 respondents each from English and MFL and 3 from Science. The remaining 8 respondents were from Mathematics, Music, Art, History, Physical Education, Business and ICT. The full range of subjects taught to pupils was represented therefore giving a broad picture of experiences in different lessons. A list of the subjects taught by each respondent is recorded and can be found in Appendix 9.

4.5 Research Question 1

What are teachers' perceptions about the inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons?

Section B of the teacher questionnaire (Appendix 2) has 8 statements specifically addressing teachers' perceptions about the inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons. 4 negatively worded statements (2, 3, 4 and 7) are reverse-scored and these are shown in red in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Section B responses of teacher questionnaire

	Section B Questionnaire items	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly disagree 1
1	The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons benefits all pupils.	2 (10.5%)	9 (47.4%)	6 (31.6%)	2 (10.5%)	0%
2	EAL pupils should be included in mainstream lessons regardless of their proficiency in English.	3 (15.8%) 1 (5.3)	9 (47.4%) 3 (15.8)	3 (15.8%) 3 (15.8%)	3 (15.8%) 9 (47.4)	1 (5.3%) 3 (15.8)
3	It is not difficult for mainstream teachers to find enough time to deal with the needs of EAL pupils.	5 (26.3%) 0	11 (57.9%) 1 (5.3)	2 (10.5%) 2 (10.5%)	(1) 5.3% (11) 57.9	0% (5) 26.3
4	EAL pupils should use their native language at school	(2) 10.5	(4) 21.1% (6) 31.6%	(7) 36.8% (7) 36.8%	(6) 31.6% (4) 21.1%	(2) 10.5%
5	I welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils in my classes.	(8) 42.1%	(8) 42.1%	(3) 15.8%		
6	When given appropriate support, I believe EAL pupils can master the curriculum.	(13) 68.4%	(6) 31.6%			
7	The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons does not increase my workload.		(12) 63.2%	(7) 36.8%	(12) 63.2	
8	I am good at helping EAL pupils to understand the material in my lessons.	(1) 5.3%	(9) 47.4%	(7) 36.8%	(2) 10.5%	

4.5.1 Questionnaire Section B

To present the findings of section B, the statements were divided into positively and negatively worded items which are discussed in sections titled parts 1 and 2. I will first look at the positively worded items which consider teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of EAL pupils and their ability to provide for them in mainstream lessons. These are Statements 1, 5, 6 and 8 and are discussed in part 1.

4.5.2. Part 1 – Teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons

In response to Statement 1 "The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons benefits all pupils", 11 teachers or 57.9% agree that the inclusion of EAL pupils benefits all students while 6 teachers or 31.6% neither agree nor disagree showing a high degree of uncertainty, that they do not know or that they are unwilling to commit to a response. Of the 6 teachers who neither agree nor disagree, 4 have been teaching for more than 10 years.

However, the issue of whether teachers welcome these pupils in their classes is perhaps more clear when looking at the results of statement 5, "I welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils in my classes," where 84.2% or 16 teachers agree with this Statement. 15.8% or 3 teachers neither agree nor disagree. Of these 3 teachers, 2 (1 male and 1 female) have been teaching for more than 10 years.

The responses to these two statements demonstrate that teachers do welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons but are not

totally convinced that it is to the advantage of all pupils as seen by the responses to Statement 1. The possible causes for this will be examined in the discussion chapter. Overall, teachers generally welcome the inclusion of pupils in their lessons but the issue of whether the inclusion of EAL pupils benefits all pupils is further illuminated by the responses to Statement 6, “When given appropriate support, I believe EAL pupils can master the curriculum,” where all teachers agree.

The results of this survey suggest that making provision for EAL pupils remains a challenge. To Statement 8, “I am good at helping EAL pupils to understand the material in my lessons,” only 52.7% or 10 teachers agree and a further 7 teachers (36.8%) neither agree nor disagree that they are adequately providing for EAL pupils. Of the 36.8% or 7 teachers who neither agree nor disagree, 3 have been teaching for more than 10 years, 2 for 1-2 years and the remaining 2 teachers have been in the profession for 6-10 years.

4.5.3 Part 2 – Teachers’ perceptions of their provision for EAL pupils

In Part 2, the results of how teachers view their success in providing for EAL pupils and why they believe that EAL pupils should not be in mainstream lessons will be presented. The statements that deal with these issues are 2, 3, 4 and 7 of Section B of the questionnaire (Appendix 2). These statements were reverse scored before analysis.

To Statement 2, “EAL pupils should be included in mainstream lessons regardless of their level of English proficiency,” only 4 teachers or 21.1% agree whereas 12 teachers or 63.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A further 3 teachers or 15.8% neither agree nor disagree with this statement. The high percentage (63.2%) of teachers not in favour of EAL pupils attending mainstream lessons until they maintain a minimum level of proficiency could relate to the practicalities of making suitable provision for these pupils. This is a recurring theme not just from the questionnaire but also the interviews.

84.2% of teachers disagree with statement 3, “It is not difficult for mainstream teachers to find enough time to deal with the needs of EAL pupils.” From the responses to statements 2 and 3, there may be a link between teachers’ beliefs of when EAL pupils should be included in mainstream lessons and the support or provision that as a classroom teacher, they can afford to give or feel equipped to provide.

The increase in a teacher’s workload could also influence teachers’ perceptions of the inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons and could be further illuminated by the response to statement 7, “The inclusion of EAL pupils in my lesson increases my workload.” 63.2% or 12 teachers agreed with statement 7 but 7 teachers or 36.8% neither agree nor disagree. Of these 7 teachers not committing to a response, 6 have been in the profession for more than 6 years.

These findings raise several points, namely, how teachers view integration and inclusion and teachers' response to government guidelines and the school's policy regarding provision and mainstreaming for NAEP. These points will be explored in the discussions chapter.

It is often suggested as good practice that bi/multilingual and EAL pupils, particularly in the early stages of learning English be allowed the space to make use of their L1 in lessons (Creese and Blackledge 2010; Cummins et al., 2005). For some pupils, this can be a source of comfort and a strategy to develop biliteracy (Mehmedbegović, 2012; De Angelis, 2011). In response to Statement 4, "EAL pupils should use their native language at school," 8 teachers or 42.1% agree and 21.1% or 4 teachers disagree. Those who disagree were showing their disapproval of the use of pupils' L1 in school and this is contrary to the school's EAL policy.

The school's EAL policy (Appendix 1) which encourages L1 usage contains a list of guidelines to assist staff in managing its use in learning opportunities in mainstream lessons. The 4 teachers or 21.1% of those surveyed who disagree are, by their responses suggesting that they are not acting in line with the school's EAL policy. The neutral response of 36.8% or a total of 7 teachers could be a lack of knowledge on the part of the teachers of the benefits that the use of the L1 could render to additional language learning or the belief that using it could hinder a pupil's development of English. Of the 7 teachers who neither agree nor disagree, 4 have been teaching for more than 10 years.

57.9% of respondents believe that the inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons benefits all pupils but an additional 5.2% are of the opinion that EAL pupils should have attained a minimum level of proficiency in English before their inclusion in mainstream lessons. From their responses, teachers demonstrate concerns over the increase in workload and their ability to adequately support pupils' language development.

4.6 Research Question 2

What are teachers' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?

Research Question 2, "What are teachers' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?" will be answered by examining the responses to Section C of the questionnaire which deals specifically with small group interaction and also by looking at the answers given by teachers during the interviews. The statements in Section C of the questionnaire are based on the review of literature which proposes interaction in small groups as a strategy to support pupils new to English.

A recurrent theme in the literature on provision for EAL pupils is oral language development and the use of talk to stimulate knowledge construction which can happen through interaction in small groups (Coelho, 2012; Graf, 2011; Gibbons, 2009). There are 19 statements in Section C of the questionnaire and a Likert scale was used to gather responses. The

responses are shown in Table 8 and Statements 5, 6, 8 and 9 were reverse scored.

Table 8: Frequency of responses of Section C of teacher questionnaire

	Questionnaire statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Small group work has a positive effect on the achievement of pupils with EAL.	(8) 42.1%	(7) 36.8%	(3) 15.8%	(1) 5.3%	
2	During small group work, pupils with EAL seem more confident and less anxious.	(8) 42.1%	(6) 31.6%	(3) 15.8%	(1) 5.3%	
3	During small group work, monolingual and bilingual EAL pupils support and learn from each other.	(5) 26.3%	(12) 63.2%	(2) 10.5%		
4	During small group work, there are more opportunities for language practice.	(8) 42.1%	(9) 47.4%	(1) 5.3%	(1) 5.3%	
5	Pupils with EAL find participating in small group work a challenge. Pupils with EAL do not find participating in small group work a challenge.		(7) 36.8% (6) 31.6%	(6) 31.6%	(6) 31.6%	
6	It is unfair to modify classwork and seating plans for EAL pupils. It is not unfair to modify classwork and seating plans for EAL pupils.	(1) 5.3% (3) 15.8%	(11) 57.9%	(4) 21.1%	(11) 57.9%	(3) 15.8%
7	I use collaborative small group work as a strategy to engage EAL pupils.	(2) 10.5%	(14) 73.7%	(2) 10.5%	(1) 5.3%	
8	Because of the demands of the curriculum, I do not have time to organize and plan group work. Even though the curriculum is demanding I have enough time to organize and plan group work.		(6) 31.6% (6) 31.6%	(7) 36.8%	(6) 31.6%	

9	Even when I plan group work, I cannot ensure that EAL pupils engage in productive talk. When I plan group work, I can ensure that EAL pupils engage in productive talk.	(1) 5.3%	(9) 47.4% (3) 15.8%	(6) 31.6%	(3) 15.8% (9) 47.4%	(1) 5.3%
10	Before organizing group work, I train all pupils in social and communicative interactions.	(2) 10.5%	(9) 47.4%	(2) 10.5%	(5) 26.3%	(1) 5.3%
11	I require training in order to plan for effective group work so that all pupils will benefit academically.	(6) 31.6%	(7) 36.8%	(3) 15.8%	(3) 15.8%	
12	Small group work provides interactional opportunities for pupils with EAL.	(6) 31.6%	(11) 57.9%	(1) 5.3%	(1) 5.3%	
13	Verbal interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to produce new language.	(5) 26.3%	(12) 63.2%	(2) 10.5%		
14	During small group work, pupils with EAL are under pressure to extend their communicative skills.	(2) 10.5%	(11) 57.9%	(5) 26.3%	(1) 5.3%	
15	Interaction during small group work supports the English language development of pupils with EAL.	(3) 15.8%	(15) 78.9%	(1) 5.3%		
16	Interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to increase their subject vocabulary.	(6) 31.6%	(12) 63.2%	(1) 5.3%		
17	Through pupil-pupil interaction pupils with EAL are better able to access the curriculum.	(4) 21.1%	(13) 68.4%	(2) 10.5%		
18	I try to create interactional opportunities for EAL pupils to listen to and to use English.	(4) 21.1%	(14) 73.7%	(1) 5.3%		
19	Pupils with EAL will improve their English whether or not they have opportunities to interact in lessons.	(1) 5.3%	(6) 31.6%	(7) 36.8%	(5) 26.3%	

The responses sharing the same theme were grouped to facilitate analysis (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010). For this section, because of the number of statements (19), I decided to present the findings in 3 parts which are “small group work and language development”, “how teachers facilitate small group work” and “teachers’ views about small group interaction.”

4.6.1 Part 1 - Small group work and language development

In response to statement 1, “Small group work has a positive effect on the achievement of pupils with EAL”, 78.9% or 15 teachers agree that small group work has a positive effect on the achievement of pupils with EAL. To Statement 4, “During small group work, there are more opportunities for language practice,” 89.5% or 17 teachers are in agreement. Statement 12, “Small group work provides interactional opportunities for pupils with EAL” elicited 89.5% or 17 teachers agreeing.

This shows strong support for language development during small group work. This is further supported by Statement 13, “Verbal interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to produce new language,” where 89.5% or 17 teachers are in agreement. 68.4% or 13 teachers agree that, “During small group work, pupils are under pressure to extend their communicative skills,” Statement 14. 94.7% or 18 respondents agree that “Interaction during small group work supports the English language development of pupils with EAL,” Statement 15.

Similarly, to Statement 16, “Interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to increase their subject vocabulary,” 94.8% or 18 teachers were in agreement. 89.5% or 17 teachers agree that “Through pupil-pupil interaction pupils with EAL are better able to access the curriculum,” Statement 17.

Overall, the majority of teachers agreed that through interaction in small group work pupils with EAL are better able to access to the curriculum, improve their subject vocabulary and have more opportunities to use English. 89.5% or 17 teachers agree to Statement 3, “During small group work monolingual and bilingual EAL pupils support and learn from each other.”

From the perspectives of the teachers who completed the questionnaire, there is a positive link between small group work and language development. This is demonstrated by the fact that in all the statements dealing with language development and interaction in small group work, more than 60% or a minimum of 13 teachers were in agreement with the statements.

4.6.2 Part 2 - How teachers facilitate small group work

This part covers teachers’ perceptions about how they facilitate small group work. The results of the questionnaire show that 73.7% or 14 teachers agree that they are prepared to modify provision for EAL pupils. This is in response to Statement 6 “It is not unfair to modify classwork and seating plans for all EAL pupils.”

Point 5 of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012) states that teaching should be adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and while the majority of the respondents to this statement agree, 21.1% or 4 teachers neither agree nor disagree. Two of the respondents who did not commit to a response have 1-2 years of experience and the other 2 more than 10 years of experience as they indicated in Section A of the questionnaire.

This leads to Statement 7, "I use collaborative small group work as a strategy to engage EAL pupils," to which 84.2% or 16 teachers agree. This response shows support for the use of small group work. In response to Statement 8, "Even though the curriculum is demanding, I have enough time to organize and plan group work." 31.6% or 6 teachers agreed. To this same Statement, 36.8% or 6 teachers neither agree nor disagree.

A closer look at the responses to Statement 7 "I use collaborative small group work as a strategy to engage EAL pupils" and to Statement 8 "Even though the curriculum is demanding, I have enough time to organize and plan group work" reveal that the respondents who neither agree nor disagree indicated that they have between 7-10 and more than 10 years of experience. Interestingly, the same two teachers also disagreed that they require training in response to Statement 11, "I require training in order to plan for effective group work so that all pupils will benefit academically".

Statement 9, "When I plan group work, I can ensure that EAL pupils engage in productive talk" had only 3 teachers or 15.8% agreeing. 6 teachers (31.6%) neither agree nor disagree and 10 teachers (50%) disagree. From

this response, one can perceive that teachers either doubt their effectiveness in organizing and managing small group work or do not yet know how to use small group work as a strategy.

In a study to research the academic performance and behaviour of pupils when taught as a whole class or in groups, Galton et al. (2009) concluded that teachers needed to pay more attention to training pupils to work in groups and Muijs and Reynolds (2011) stated that it is not just important to place pupils in groups but that it is also necessary to direct them in how to take part and make the most of what group work can offer. 68.4% or 13 teachers agree to Statement 11, “I require training in order to plan for effective group work so that all pupils will benefit academically.”

The need for training is evident in responses to various statements. Based on the responses, there is evidence that group work does take place but teachers seem to doubt their success in managing group work. 11 teachers or 57.9% of respondents agree to Statement 10, “Before organizing group work, I train all pupils in social and communicative interactions,” while 94.8% or 18 teachers are in agreement with statement 18, “I try to create interactional opportunities for EAL pupils to listen to and to use English.”

At the start of the 2012/2013 academic year, in conjunction with the whole school focus on literacy, there was also an initiative to develop listening and speaking across the curriculum. It is therefore not surprising that 11 teachers or 57.9% say that they train pupils in communicative and social interactions even though 31.6% or 6 teachers say they do not do so. There

is no significant pattern in terms of age, length of experience and subjects taught from the teachers who indicated that they do not train pupils in social and communicative skills.

The only pattern of note is that two Science teachers disagree and both have 3-6 years of experience whereas the third Science teacher who responded to the questionnaire and who admitted to training pupils in social and communicative skills has 1-2 years of experience and was, at that time the “Literacy champion” for the Science Department. A Literacy champion is a designated member of staff who works to develop the confidence and skills of the teachers within their own subject area. The Literacy champion is a member of the school’s Literacy team and at the time worked closely with the Literacy coordinator.

While the questionnaire does not deal specifically with the social and emotional benefits of small group work, one statement points to the well-being of pupils. Small group work is also encouraged for promoting a positive affective environment (Haneda and Wells, 2008). Statement 2 “During small group work, pupils with EAL seem more confident and less anxious,” 73.7% or 14 teachers are in agreement. This point will be further explored in the discussion chapter.

4.6.3 Part 3 - Teachers’ perceptions about small group interaction

In the literature review, interaction was highlighted as having a role to play in additional language learning and a small group setting was discussed as

being ideal for pupils to interact with their peers (Storch and Aldosari, 2012; Coelho, 2012). Some questionnaire statements and interview questions addressed interaction and additional language learning for EAL pupils. In the interview, Teacher 8 states that when interaction occurs, it can provide opportunities for pupils to learn subject specific vocabulary and progress with content by following examples,

“Interaction when it happens is good but I have to be careful that the children want to be in a group and want to work together and that, you know, they actually get work done. I guess when they are given, like to build something and then explain. They can watch and follow and get help with the explanation. It is good if they can listen to other pupils and use the same words and vocabulary.” (Teacher 8, interview)

When asked for her views on the importance of interaction, Teacher 5 responded,

“I believe that interaction in small group work is important for pupils with EAL because it gives them a platform to practise, correct and learn to improve their language skills. I think this is key to building confidence and encouragement, this should also result in more practice outside the classroom setting.” (Teacher 5, interview)

Teacher 5 further remarked, “The problem facing many EAL pupils is that they are often lacking interaction in English at home with family.” (Teacher 5, interview)

Teacher 5 is the only member of staff to raise the point that outside of the classroom, many EAL pupils may not have opportunities to communicate in English and that interaction inside the formal classroom setting can

encourage pupils to continue to practise English outside the classroom. This observation by teacher 5 adds another level of importance to the need for the creation of teaching and learning situations where pupils work in groups because opportunities that might be lacking at home can be honed in the formal educational arena. The school then has the task of equipping pupils with the language skills that they need not just for academic purposes but to function and participate in the wider community.

Teacher 6's response also captures the idea that interaction during group work promotes the kind of learning that is needed for participation in the real world. Teacher 6 states, "Group interaction can be considered to promote active learning, inclusive and socially effective learning." Further along in the interview, teacher 6 added,

"Group work can be a major contributor to facilitating the kind of interaction which contributes positively to improve conditions for learning." (Teacher 6, interview)

When asked to expand on this idea, Teacher 6 explains that tasks and activities are used to generate language and to encourage participation and that these form interactive activities which then lead to learning. Teacher 5 emphasizes the support that can be offered by group members during small group work, "It can also encourage pupil to pupil correction, which within respectful limits is extremely effective."

Teacher 5 identifies pupil-pupil correction and picks up on the aspect of corrective feedback which can be defined as an indication to a learner that

an utterance in the target language is incorrect (Gass and Selinker, 2008). For pupils to build on each other's knowledge and to learn from and with one another there should be understanding and acceptance within the group that one is allowed to offer corrections and suggestions on improving language.

This sense of security and mutual trust has to be built and fostered and this is where teachers must ensure that pupils are adequately prepared and taught how to collaborate during group work (Haynes and Zacarian, 2010). This sentiment was shared by Teacher 7 who believes that teachers play a significant role in organising the kind of group structure that will enable NAEP to form suitable collaborative and interactive relationships, "Of course, the group has to work for them so I guess that is where we have to structure it to fit around the pupils we have." (Teacher 7, interview)

Directly addressing interaction, Teacher 7 mentioned peer-peer correction sharing the view that during small group work, pupils have an outlet to express themselves and to practise language with support and correction from their peers,

"Interaction during group work is important because it gives pupils an outlet to express themselves, you understand they can talk and only the members of the group will hear. Their peers can correct them. Sometimes you see how comfortable they are when they are in smaller groups so it gives them time to practise, to rehearse. I mean when we have to do a presentation of some sorts, they help each other with the lines. You should hear them before they do their work, even if just one sentence they make sure it is correct, with the pronunciation and all, they take time to get the pronunciation correct and to understand the words." (Teacher 7, interview)

Teacher 7 also expressed the view that involvement in a group helps with the social acceptance that some NAEP need,

“Being part of a group helps them to feel accepted because when they are new, it is easy to feel isolated and lost. I can see that happening sometimes. I have had that many new ones in my year 9 class and now you can see some of them bonding so it is important that they continue this and be supported in lessons and being part of a group can make that happen.” (Teacher 7, interview)

Teacher 8 shares positive and negative perceptions of how being part of a small group and having the opportunity to interact can help NAEP. While teacher 8’s perception is that there can be definite benefits or gains, she is also cognizant that pupils have to be willing or have the desire to cooperate with others, to share their understanding and knowledge. Teacher 8 explains,

“It is best to put them in groups with nice pupils who can provide good models of English but even so, even the nice pupils have to be willing to support their peers and to be patient. We have some lovely children but sometimes they may want to work alone. D..., that lovely little girl who sits over (points) there gets everything right but she likes to sit quietly and do her work.” (Teacher 8, interview)

Teacher 8 raises the question of pupils’ willingness to be part of a team which is an issue that provokes one to consider whether at an early stage in planning for teaching and learning that pupils ought to be consulted about the possibility of them working in groups. This point will be explored in the discussion chapter.

4.7 Questionnaire – Section D

One of the purposes of this research was to ascertain the challenges that pupils face during small group and the opportunities that they gain. Section

D is divided into two parts; Part 1 has five statements outlining language related challenges that might be faced by NAEP as they try to interact with their peers during small group work in mainstream lessons. Part 2 comprises six statements which deal with the opportunities that interaction in small group work can bring to NAEP.

4.7.1 Section D - Part 1

Learning the language of education is just one of the many challenges faced by NAEP as they start school and this is the focus of Part 1. In Statement C in section D, “During small group work, pupils with EAL face challenges in initiating conversation about the subject matter”, 7 teachers or 36.8% neither agree nor disagree which could link to statement 9 of section C, “Even when I plan group work, I cannot ensure that EAL pupils engage in productive talk” where 6 teachers or 31.6% chose the neutral response.

As discussed before, teachers are aware that small group work could be an ideal environment for language learning but there is an uncertainty in how to actually ensure that this leads to language development and learning. It must be noted as well that there are cases where a NAEP may be unfamiliar with the subject content.

In the school context of this research, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the pupil population is rapidly increasing and in mainstream lessons, there are invariably EAL pupils with different levels of proficiency in English and their L1 so it not surprising that 57.9% or 11 teachers believe that EAL

pupils face challenges in “understanding their other EAL peers”, Statement b.

Only 47.4% or 9 teachers believe that EAL pupils face challenges in “coping with new forms of classroom organization such as group work”, Statement e. Some pupils might not be accustomed to working in and contributing to group tasks and might find it challenging to deal with their peers. Some pupils may face additional challenges if they have to work with a member of the opposite sex (Coelho, 2012). These are but two concerns that teachers need to consider when planning

4.7.2 Section D - Part 2

Part 2 focuses on the opportunities that small group work can offer NAEP. There are six statements covering engagement in collaborative talk, exposure to and practice of subject-specific English and good models of spoken English, peer support and not feeling under pressure. 94.8% or 18 teachers agree that small group work offers EAL pupils opportunities to engage in collaborative talk. 84.2% of respondents or 16 teachers agree that EAL pupils are able to pay attention and practise subject-specific language during small group work.

One of the purposes of small group work is to encourage learning through talk and to provide pupils with an environment in which they feel confident and able to express their ideas (Gibbons, 2009; Gravelle, 2005). 13 or 68.4% of teachers agreed to Statement f, “Small group work offers pupils with EAL opportunities to develop discourse competence without feeling

under pressure.” The perception of the majority of teachers is that a small group environment supports pupils’ language development. 14 or 73.6% of teachers agree that small group work offers pupils opportunities to listen to good models of spoken English. To Statement d, “Small group work offers pupils with EAL opportunities to be actively engaged in learning tasks, 14 or 89.4 % of teachers agree.

4.8 Questionnaire – Section E

Section E has three open-ended questions which were included to give respondents the chance to add their perceptions without prompting, to show that their views are valued and to highlight other issues (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010). The responses to this section were categorised into themes for analysis. For each question of section E, the themes were decided after reading through and noting similar responses which would help in answering the research questions.

Section E – Part 1 “What are some of the challenges that you face with NAEP in your classes?”

The main challenges identified by teachers who completed the questionnaire are “accessibility of the curriculum” “communication and language barriers” and “social issues.” This section will be discussed under these headings.

4.8.1 Accessibility of the curriculum

The school where this research takes place welcomes frequent mid-term new arrivals and concerns regarding the curriculum abound. In Section e of

the questionnaire, teachers 1 and 3, for example, mentioned as challenges their search to make the curriculum more accessible to pupils. Teacher 3 states,

“The main challenge I face with NAEP is building a lesson which meets their needs, as well as meeting the needs of the other students in the groups.” (Teacher 3, questionnaire)

Teacher 1, questions whether it is better to teach language skills and focus less heavily on the curriculum,

“Knowing what to focus on in terms of the curriculum, i.e. when teaching a topic is it better to keep teaching the subject with scaffolding for pupils and hope they pick some of it up even if they can’t understand vocabulary or articulate exactly what they know or is it better to teach language skills and focus less heavily on the curriculum.” (Teacher 1, questionnaire)

One of the issues identified by Teacher 1 above is whether to teach English language skills or subject content and both teachers raise the dilemma of knowing and understanding when, if and how to separate language from subject content. One feature of recommended good practice is that subject teachers need to separate the language demands from the language content and be prepared to teach both (Brentnall, 2009; Arkoudis, 2005).

4.8.2 Communication and language barriers

Of the 19 teachers who completed the questionnaire, 11 or 57.8% included language and communication barriers as part of their challenges. Teacher 5 stated that “communication is the biggest challenge” while Teacher 19 said “understanding them when they talk” and Teacher 8 wrote “Language barrier that hinders understanding.” Teacher 14 added that one of her

challenges is “knowing their level of ability which can be hidden by language barriers.” In this statement, “If not properly informed, the classroom teacher tends to be unprepared to deal with pupils who cannot read or write,”

Teacher 9 is highlighting two points; firstly that teachers sometimes do not have the necessary information or the knowledge and capability to deal with a pupil new to English and schooling and secondly, that some pupils arrive without the expected language skills, from the point of view of the teachers surveyed of reading and writing.

4.8.3 Social issues

Social and cultural integration are other challenges identified by some teachers and although these points were not elaborated upon or explained in details, there exists the concern that other than academic challenges, these are barriers that can have an impact on a pupil’s language development. In response to, “What are some of the challenges that you face with newly arrived EAL pupils in your classes?” Teacher 16 wrote, “Social integration with monolingual peers.” (Teacher 16, Section E of questionnaire)

Teacher 2 highlighted what he perceived as reluctance on the part of some EAL pupils to communicate with their peers when he stated, “Lack of interest to integrate with British society” (Teacher 2, section E, questionnaire). Teacher 16 added, “The classroom culture does not always welcome social integration of EAL and non-EAL children.”

From these responses to open questions, the teachers who brought these points to the fore are highlighting issues that from their experience impinge on the inclusion and additional language learning experiences of NAEP. So, even before one can begin to consider placing pupils in groups to approach subject and language learning, there are other issues that assume greater importance. From the interview, Teacher 7's response suggests that the group setting can help to consolidate a sense of belonging and acceptance,

"I have had that many new ones in my Year 9 class and now you can see some of them bonding so it is important that they continue this and be supported in lessons and being part of a group can make that happen." (Teacher 7, Interview)

Section E – Part 2 “Please describe any strategies that you use to help NAEP in your classes.

The most common strategies identified by teachers in this section are “buddying/ pairing with another pupil”, “using an autobiographical approach”, “including examples from pupils’ cultural background” and “vocabulary development”. These strategies are also found in the wider literature on the teaching of EAL pupils (Haneda and Wells, 2012; Windle and Miller, 2012; Graf, 2011; Gibbons, 2009).

4.8.4 Vocabulary development

In order to build the vocabulary of NAEP, the teachers who completed the questionnaire state that they employ a range of strategies including the use of key words, translation of key words, visual aids and bilingual dictionaries, pupil mentoring, small group work, paired work,

autobiographical writing and drawing on examples from pupils' background and culture.

As part of her repertoire of strategies related to vocabulary development, Teacher 1 states, "Matching pictures to key vocabulary, repetition of vocabulary and where possible, the use of bilingual dictionaries. Teacher 9 adds, "labelling, using a dictionary to find key vocabulary." Teacher 3 wrote, "Attempting to use pictures and visual aids to demonstrate new vocabulary rather than relying on English." From these examples, we can discern that teachers are aware of the need to teach explicitly at the word level however, we can cast our eyes back at the dilemma faced by one teacher who questions whether she should concentrate on teaching language or subject content,

"Knowing what to focus on in terms of the curriculum. i.e. when teaching a topic is it better to keep teaching the subject with scaffolding for pupils and hope they pick some of it up even if they can't understand vocabulary or articulate exactly what they know or is it better to teach language skills and focus less heavily on the curriculum." (Teacher 1, Section E of Questionnaire)

4.8.5 Buddy or pairing

Some teachers mention assigning a peer, either from the same linguistic background or a monolingual English speaking classmate to support the NAEP. Teacher 3 notes,

"I think that there sometimes a case for newly arrived students to be buddied with someone who speaks the same language as them as students need to feel comfortable in their surrounds in order to learn."

Teacher 3 also picks up on the point of NAEP needing to feel secure and the comfort that can be had from hearing and using their L1. Teacher 16 takes this a step further and outlines the need to also include peers from a different language background as well as those who may be at a higher level academically, “buddying with same language peers, buddying with EAL peers who do not speak the same language, buddying with high-ability monolingual peer.” (Teacher 16, Section E of questionnaire)

For the overall progress of NAEP, the rationale for “buddying or pairing” as explained by the teachers above can provide emotional, social and academic support if properly managed (Pim 2012; Graf, 2011). Other important points mentioned by the teachers are modification of classwork and incorporating aspects of a pupil’s cultural and historical background.

Teacher 14 states “Adapt tasks to suit as with SEN students re: amount of text to read/writing expected” and Teacher 2, “Using examples from their culture or background as well as refer to the History/Geography of the country they are from”. The use of group work is mentioned by two teachers. Teacher 9 states that one of his strategies is “Group work and ensure that each person plays a part” and Teacher 15 “Put them in teams and make sure that they take part in group games.”

Section E – Part 3 **“Please write any additional comments you have about this questionnaire”**

Of the 19 teachers who completed the questionnaire, only 9 teachers or 47% completed the third part of Section E. The responses to the third section mainly concern “professional development”, “staff collaboration”, and “TA support.”

4.8.6 Professional development

To start, Teacher 17 identified “staff awareness and training for staff working with EAL students” while Teacher 3 wrote about the importance of having continuing professional development (CPD) sessions on how to support EAL learners. This, Teacher 3 suggested would help to make teachers more confident, “CPD in schools is a really important way of allowing staff to feel confident with teaching EAL students.” (Teacher 3, Section E of questionnaire)

A recurring point in the literature is the lack of professional development opportunities and the need for further development of EAL and teacher preparation in initial teacher training programmes (NALDIC, 2012; Cajkler and Hall, 2010). Teacher 16 also shared this view by expanding on the perception that teachers are not sufficiently trained to deal with the needs of EAL pupils, stating that,

“the current UK education system does not equip teachers with the sufficient skills or knowledge of how to help EAL students to succeed. I also think that EAL teaching is not given enough importance in the education system.” (Teacher 16, Section E, Questionnaire)

These views underscore the need to prepare teachers to deal with the needs of EAL pupils.

4.8.7 TA support and collaboration

Teacher 9 referred to the need for additional support in the form of TAs in the mainstream classroom,

“More TAs are needed to work with subject teachers and pupils. Too often, subject teachers have to "juggle" to cater to all the different levels and abilities in their lessons. In an ideal world, small groups would be great...and we could better help the EAL pupils to adapt better to mainstream.” (Teacher 9, Section E of questionnaire)

Teacher 17's perception is that there is a need for better collaboration amongst members of staff, “Better collaboration between all staff that works with EAL students.”

4.9 Teacher Interviews

An email was sent to the teaching staff inviting them to participate in the interview. 10 teachers responded and all agreed to be interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were recorded and after reading the transcriptions, common themes were noted. The themes were highlighted by first identifying topics common to NAEP in mainstream lessons based on theories gathered from the literature review and the frequency or number of times that reference was made to that particular issue or point during the interviews with the teachers.

The questions used as a guide for the semi-structured interviews are on page 97. The points arising from the interviews with teachers are “perceptions

about NAEP”, “grouping issues”, “use of L1” and teachers’ perceptions about pupils’ perception of small group work”.

4.9.1 Perceptions about NAEP

Through the interviews conducted with mainstream teachers, some perceptions about NAEP in mainstream lessons emerged. Teacher 1 explained that from her pupils, she has been able to learn about “educational structures” in different countries. Teacher 2 discusses her changing perceptions about EAL pupils in general and her anxiety about providing adequate support,

“I realize that some of them can have tragic backgrounds and also that sometimes I do stereotype. Honestly, now I realize that I have to take a bit of time before I assess how far I can push them because I really did and I am ashamed to admit it, think that they weren’t necessarily quick learners. I didn’t realize that some could acquire the skills, depending on the background, put them all into one category like dyslexia. It’s wrong.” (Teacher 2, interview)

4.9.2 Grouping issues

I was also able to gather a more in depth view of how teachers perceive group work and the issues that they have to consider when organizing and planning group work. Some issues identified are cultural and social differences, language barriers and gender. Teacher 4 discusses the positive and negative of group work. Teacher 4 highlights as positive that group work provides the opportunities for pupils not to go “unnoticed” and that they have to contribute to a task. The downside of group work is the challenge of supervising every small group within one class,

“you can’t man every group so if you have staff that you can distribute amongst each group then that would be ideal but if you are one person in the class and you have four/five groups, you have to go around and you don’t necessarily know what is going on in each group if you are not present so that is the challenge. Staffing is a challenge in that case.” (Teacher 4, interview)

Another issue that could be a disadvantage, according to teacher 4 has to do with gender,

“Sometimes about the cultural difference, in certain cultures, female and male don’t interact on the same level like here in England and certain students use that for, (') not to collaborate or to work together with, for example, male and female students and that could be a challenge. Sometimes, girls are used to being taught in girls’ classes only and boys in boys’ class only. I find it sometimes it is done deliberately by certain students that they use that for their own gain to get across that they do not want to work with somebody and they use that rather than, they are making a bigger issue than it is so that could be a challenge.”
(Teacher 4, interview)

The perceptions shared by Teacher 4, above, highlight staffing and gender as two issues to be taken into account when planning and organizing for small group work. From points and observations noted by teachers during the interviews, the importance of carefully considering group dynamics when organizing groups is emphasized. Furthermore, it should be planned in such a way that interaction leading to learning of both language and content takes place (Haynes and Zacarian, 2010; Haneda, 2009).

Statement 10 of Section c of the questionnaire “Before organizing group work, I train all pupils in social and communicative interactions” touches on this and 11 or 57.9% of teachers agreed that they do. Even in cases where

NAEP may not be able to contribute fully, the group atmosphere should be such that one can listen to and follow a conversation. Teacher 2 explains,

“I group them with people who I know will give them a chance to speak cause if I don’t do that, they’ll be left, pushed out of a group and stronger characters won’t even give them a chance.”

Teacher 3 explains how he manages small group work to ensure that pupils are making the best use of their time. When asked if he believed that pupil-pupil interaction was beneficial, teacher 3 responded,

“Yes, but, I am also aware of that fact that sometimes if you put friends together, they don’t practise the English language so I, most cases will separate them until there is a specific task that I want them to do that I feel they sitting together will benefit them better than sitting apart.” (Teacher 3, interview)

From these comments and based on evidence from the literature, it is likely that for small group work to be effective and for pupils to benefit, teachers have to be well placed, informed and able to act on this information to organise and manage small group work (Coelho, 2012; Gravelle, 2005). It should be remembered too that teachers have to put serious thought into the reasons behind small group in their lessons. When asked his perception on whether interaction in small group work can help a NAEP to develop their English, Teacher 4 stated,

“It is important, that is very important but at the same time we don’t want those students, the mother tongue English speaking students to burden with the extra kind of work but it has to be done in a way that suits everybody.” (Teacher 4, interview)

Teacher 4 introduces another important point; that of considering the pupils who are relied on to support or to be language models for the less proficient ones. There has to be a balanced system in place so that there is collaboration, mutual assistance and support for pupils who either consciously or unconsciously assume the role. This is another reason why it is important for teachers to train and socialise pupils in small group work.

4.9.3 Use of the L1

During the interviews teachers were asked whether interaction in English during small group work helps to further a pupil's language skills in English. Teacher 3 replied,

“Definitely, definitely, I think that's important, that if we want to help students to improve their English language, they need to be with somebody who will follow basic rules. The rule is, you don't speak your native language in the class. If that happens, then I wouldn't pair a student with that particular student again.” (Teacher 3, interview)

Teacher 3 is quite clear on his position; that the L1 is not allowed in lessons.

Teacher 4, however, presents a more positive picture about the use of the L1 and demonstrates that he has clear guidelines for L1 usage,

“I try to have sometimes the same speaker, the same language speaker, that they speak the language so they can explain if I feel the task needs to be explained in the first language and if another student is able but sometimes I feel they need to be mixed and they need to be separated from those who speak the same language and they have to interact within the different language groups, of course talking in English because it will give them more confidence of course depending on the task, yes.” (Teacher 4, interview)

4.9.4 Teachers' perceptions about pupils' perceptions

Three teachers expressed their perceptions about how pupils see their involvement in small group work. Teacher 4 says,

“I think smaller groups provide more opportunities for them to come out, to learn to ask questions if they are not sure about something. The only thing that I see sometimes, the negative point is certain students have a negative perception and they think they are disadvantaged by being EAL.” (Teacher 4, interview)

This point could be linked to the organization and management of small group work. If pupils feel that that they are placed in a particular group because of their limited proficiency in English, they might not be motivated to engage in group work. Referring to a particular pupil, teacher 2 states,

“I don't know whether he (pauses) he wanted to stay with the more EAL students and now he would not, he would be insulted actually if I made him sit with a group of students who are, who he could see what I was up to, he would be insulted.” (Teacher 2, interview)

Teacher 3 also makes reference to this point and highlights the need to have a strategy in place to tackle this issue,

“For the pupils, sometimes it may look as if you have, you are trying to create a separation in the class. Other students may interpret it differently because you did not allow him/her to sit with a friend but with this new arrived student, you have allowed him/her to sit with another friend so it creates sometimes a tension within a class but you got to have a strategy to address it.” (Teacher 3, interview)

4.10 Research Question 3

“What are TAs’ perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?”

To answer this research question, the TAs were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix 3) and to take part in an interview. The responses from the interviews are discussed under two themes, “experiences with NAEP” and “experiences of small group work”.

4.10.1 Experiences with NAEP

When asked about her experiences with NAEP in mainstream lessons, TA 1 was positive in her responses and attributed this to the willingness of the pupils to learn even when they are unable to understand everything that is being taught,

“In the lessons that I support, the EAL learners are normally quite willing to learn. They are, most times they are interested in what is being taught.”
(TA 1, interview)

When discussing experiences with NAEP, TA 2 explained that the support provided depends on whether the pupil is in KS 3 or KS 4 and the pupil’s level of proficiency in English. According to TA 2, with KS 3 pupils, it is easier to focus on building vocabulary and language skills whereas with KS 4 pupils who are expected to sit examinations, the focus has to be on subject content and preparations for examinations.

This is similar to comments shared by Teacher 1 who is of the opinion that group work does not always suit the purposes or objectives of a learning task or indeed as a way of meeting the needs of pupils who are struggling

academically. Such pupils, according to Teacher 1, would benefit from teacher support or paired work.

“Yes, I think they would, probably, if, or a buddy, not just the teacher, but a buddy, not a group of say 5 or 6 boisterous children. But just a buddy, somebody who they can work with a bit more closely.” (Teacher 1, interview)

4.10.2 Experiences with small group work

When asked whether they had had opportunities to work with small groups during mainstream lessons, both TAs answered positively and gave additional details. According to TA 1, pupils are more focused and engaged when they are working in small groups as opposed to whole class teaching because of the support given by peers and the intimate atmosphere of a small group lends itself to more time for work related explanations.

“Yes, it does help, small group does help the EAL students because they can, they have time to discuss and take in what is being taught and sometimes their peers explain to them as well what is happening and they have more time then to digest what is being said whereas with when the teacher is teaching a big group a lot of what is being said gets lost to the EAL learners because they don’t understand the work that is being given some of the times or what is being said”. (TA 1, interview)

TA 2 replied that not many teachers organize and plan group work but added that the lack of staff to supervise might be the reason some teachers do not do it,

“Some teachers do organize it, I have to say not many but those that do, I found that work really organized and that pupils are learning much better in a way so if there is extra support in the lesson and the teacher has that chance to organize, to have more staff in the classroom to put it that way, then (').” (TA 2, interview)

When asked about the advantages of small group work, it was the perception of both TAs that for NAEP, small group work could provide better opportunities because pupils felt more confident and at ease to speak, have more time to formulate responses and to ask questions. The statements below help to clarify how both TAs perceive the opportunities afforded by small group.

“Oh definitely, yes it does because when, when in small groups, they are able, there are times when there is question and answer and then they have more time then to speak whereas in a bigger group they don’t, they tend to be very shy and they don’t speak but when they are within a smaller group, then they tend to say more or they tend to be able to hear more, listen more and get the opportunity to speak.”
(TA 1, interview)

“I think it is self-confidence, EAL students are, they will talk and interact with other peers easier if they are in a smaller group and interaction goes better”. (TA 2, interview)

“I believe that that is a very good example of enabling EAL students to get out of their shells and to actually show their ability more than in just the whole class room situation”. (TA 2, interview)

On the subject of interaction, TA 2 stated unless he is helping pupils with examination coursework, it would be preferable for pupils to interact with each other as he would not want other learners to feel left out or for it to seem as if they are not all receiving support. This is important for the emotional and social well-being of all pupils and for social harmony in mainstream lessons,

“I prefer them to interact with other student and that they don’t see me just helping them but rather collaborating with the other students, helping other students so that they feel equal amongst the other”.

(TA 2, interview)

I asked TA 1 if, when supporting pupils in mainstream lessons, she ensures that they are able to interact with each other. To this, she replied that depending on the size of the group and the fact that she would not be able “to get around to all of them”, she would ask a more proficient pupil to provide support. Following this, TA 1 then informed me that, in terms of the actual organization of small groups, very often, NAEP with limited proficiency in English are seated together and this makes it difficult for them to develop their skills in English. When I asked if it was possible for her to try to group pupils, the response was,

“I don’t get the chance to do that because the teacher often put the students in the groups together and I’ve been into classrooms where I’ve seen the teacher actually seat maybe a student who speaks little English next to a student who is, who does speak English, who is monolingual but it doesn’t happen all the while.” (TA 1, interview)

The statement above addresses two points made by the TAs; the lack of planning time with mainstream teachers and not having an influence on teachers’ grouping strategies. When asked if they are involved in planning for small group work with mainstream teachers, TA 1 stated “On occasions, yes but not, not many times I have to say.” As mentioned before, there is a need for collaboration amongst staff working with NAEP because those

supporting, namely, the TAs would be able to better prepare for how pupils will engage in learning tasks. On this note, TA 1 explained,

“Oh, I think it would be extremely important because it would give the opportunity to prepare more tasks, that they are suitable for EAL and non-EAL learners and how they could interact maybe in a better way if I knew what’s going to happen and what’s the plan for their group work.” (TA 1, interview)

On the subject of whether or not interacting with peers during small group work helps NAEP to develop English, TA 1’s perception is that even if a pupil is not able to construct a complete sentence, they do learn “words” from other pupils and this in itself is progress in acquiring English. For TA 2, placing EAL pupils in “mixed groups”, that is, composed of NAEP and monolingual English speakers offer opportunities to interact, listen to and model language and contribute to discussions. Of significance is the fact that getting pupils to engage and to participate in group tasks creates a sense of belonging as mentioned by TA 2,

“EAL students can then contribute to the discussion and you give them the task that you think they are able to do even if it is time keeping but you encourage them to talk and to take part and that they feel, a very important thing for me, that they feel that they belong to that group as a member, that belonging.” (TA 2, interview)

When asked about the challenges that NAEP could encounter during small group work, TA 1 again spoke about self-confidence but this time in reference to the fact that some NAEP may lack the confidence to take part in group work. For TA 2, another challenge worth highlighting is that some

NAEP may not be familiar with the expectations of group work due to their unfamiliarity with the educational system. TA 2 explains,

“I am not saying much difference but the methods that teachers use is probably different and some students, I do not know, they used to go to school where the method is that they listen to teacher maybe they copy from the board but I think in British schools, they focus on interaction more than in others. That is my feeling and I think students sometimes are not prepared, that they are actually expected to interact in the classroom on such level that we would like them to be.” (TA 1, interview)

For this and other reasons, it is important that teachers prepare pupils to work in small groups.

4.11 Research Question 4

Two focus group discussions with KS 3 pupils were organized to gather responses to the fourth research question, “**What are the perceptions of NAEP about their involvement in small group work?**”

The guide questions for the focus group discussions are in Appendix 11 and for each focus group, pupils were recorded on a voice recorder and their responses were later transcribed. The principal aim of the focus group discussions was to gather pupils’ perceptions of small group work. Several statements made by the pupils during the first focus group discussion reflected the teaching and learning strategies and practices that were put in place to promote literacy and reading across the curriculum.

After transcribing the interviews, themes were extracted to facilitate data analysis. The themes are “pupils’ awareness of their limited proficiency in

English”, “pupils’ recognition of the support provided by small group work”, “L1 usage during small group work” and “pupil contribution to small group work”.

4.12 Focus Group 1

In the first focus group, 6 pupils participated. Letters U, V, W, X, Y and Z were used to refer to these pupils. The results of the first focus group are presented in themes which were selected to organise and to facilitate analysis and discussion of the findings.

4.12.1 Pupils’ awareness of their limited proficiency in English

Generally, pupils’ perception of small group work is that it is positive because they receive support from their peers in areas such as pronunciation, reading comprehension and spelling. From the conversations with the pupils, there was a frank recognition and self-awareness of their limited proficiency in English. In response to “Do you enjoy when you are working in a group in lessons? Pupil X declared, “Ah, yes I do because I’m not good at reading and English. I can’t write properly, spell”. This shows that pupil X depends on peer-peer support, specifically with reading and spelling in his group and he is aware of this and he later explains further when asked if he finds it difficult to work with other pupils in a group,

“it is hard for me because I can’t read proper and I can’t spell proper so if I am with a group, other people can help. If I have more group in year 9, that will be good”. (Pupil X, focus group 1)

Pupil U's response to "Do you enjoy when you are working in a group in lessons?" was "nice because you don't know English and it helps." To the same question, pupil Y responded, "because you learning English, learning with those people."

4.12.2 Pupils' recognition of the support provided by small group work

By stating that he would like to have small group work in Year 9, Pupil X is showing his recognition of the support that he receives and the knowledge that this support is beneficial for him. Pupil V also shows why she enjoys small group work by stating that, "It is ok when you have other people who help and read for you". The comments made by Pupil U and pupil Y are also evidence that pupils new to English recognise the advantages that participating in a group can provide. The English department is one of the departments in the school where, as part of the drive to improve standards of literacy and reading, small group work is a regular part of mainstream lessons and pupils are assigned to designated reading groups. Pupil Y's response to this was,

"The first time I came to school I did not enjoy it. I did not know how to spell properly and speak properly and I know how to spell and I know how to read." (Pupil Y, focus group 1)

When asked about the form of support received and given during small group work, Pupil Z remarked, "we learn more with the group how to talk, spelling" and Pupil Y answered, "And when we do the work we come out the front and read. You get help before you come out the front." Here,

Pupil Y is explaining that often, they are given a task to prepare in groups and then have to present their work in front of the class and each pupil is expected to be actively involved. Pupil Y's comment suggests that during the preparation stage in small group work, there is support from other members of the group.

Through taking part in the planning of the task and then having to present in front of the class, a NAEP is positioned to receive and produce language. This type of task preparation has the potential to provide linguistic, social and interactional opportunities for pupils (Bunch, 2009; Swain, 2005). To the question, "How does group work help you? How is it helpful? Pupil Y answered,

"You feel better cause like when the teacher say you have to do something, you do it with other people and they explain. But sometimes, I try and if I don't try, they say oh, she doesn't know the work and don't write my name." (Pupil Y, focus group 1)

From Pupil Y's comment above, I would like to highlight two points. The first is that pupil Y has identified peer-peer support where pupils explain classwork. The second point is that as everyone is expected to contribute to group work and if a NAEP fails to adequately participate or to make a valuable contribution, they "don't write my name." This can make the pupil feel that he is not a valued member of the group, has not made any worthwhile contribution or that these have gone unnoticed. Pupil V also makes this point,

“If you are in one group and you don’t know anything and the other group know, they just gonna tell the teacher and say she not speaking, she not writing, she not done anything.” (Pupil V, focus group 1)

Based on these pupils’ perceptions, they are showing that they recognize that they are not yet proficient in English and that this is a barrier both to their participation and recognition as valued members of the group by their co-participants.

Pupil Z’s response to “How does group work help you? How is it helpful?” shows pupil recognition of support provided through group work,

“Nice. We help each other. We talk to each other and we read something to each other. When I start this school, I did not know any English and how to read something and I can’t write properly”. (Pupil Z, focus group 1)

By talking about what he can/cannot do, pupil Z demonstrates that he has peer support in his weaker skills. The discussion then concentrated on the use of the L1 during small group work.

4.12.3 L1 usage during small group work

From this part of the discussion, pupils expressed how the use of their L1 could help in their understanding of the lesson content. Pupil Y stated, “When me and N and her (pointing) working to each other, when it’s hard to say it, we say it in Somali so we can understand each other”. Below, I will share a brief extract from the transcript to illustrate this point.

Teacher: Do you think that that helps? Speaking in Somali

Pupil Y: I think, yeah, cause when we talking about like, we can't say the word, then if we tell her (points at another pupil) so she can understand what I am mean.

Pupil X: So, somebody who speak your language can help you (-) like in Science if I say (pupil's name), help me with this, he help me cause he know better English, he bright boy then he can tell me in Urdu.

Pupil U: When my friend with me, sometimes she speak my language and I understand.

As well as support through the use of their L1, pupils shared that they are able to make progress in English as pupil Y stated,

“Yeah, cause when the people in my group don't speak my language and the teacher say you have to do this or do that but you know sometimes the other people say the word, you have to say the word too. And sometimes they spell the word”. (Pupil Y, focus group 1)

Pupil V adds,

“I hear my friend she speaking English so I know how to say things in English. I don't like when the teacher say you have to stand up, go up there”.

4.12.4 Pupil contributions to small group work

In addition to the positive perceptions that pupils in the focus group discussion have expressed over small group work, there are also some negative perceptions of group work. One of these is the that if the NAEP is not in a position to make a contribution to small group work then the other

members of the group would not want to “write my name”, meaning that they would not be recognized as a member of the group.

Another point relates to the shyness experienced by some pupils when they are called upon to do group presentations and have to stand in front of the class. Pupil Y says, “And you gonna be so shy (-) the class, everyone going to alright”. Pupil Z also refers to this when he states “when we speak up there, it is difficult because everybody laughing”. When asked “How do you feel when you have to talk during group work”, pupil U said “sometimes shy” and pupil X added “all the time shy”.

This brings us to the pupil’s well-being, self-confidence and feelings of insecurity as they struggle to use English and especially in front of their peers. While pupils do acknowledge the support and benefits gained from participating in group work, they are very aware of their limited proficiency in English and demonstrate that they are self-conscious that they are still in the process of acquiring the skills to speak and to read. Pupil X shares his perceptions about this,

“Like when I go in English, when Miss says to everyone to read, when she comes to me, your turn to read (says his name) and I can’t read, I try my best but I can’t read” (Pupil X, focus group 1)

Pupil V adds,

“I can read and I do read but sometimes when the big word, longs words, yeah, the big word, when I reading it yeah, and somebody might say, say it this way or like this. It is so embarrassing”. (Pupil V, focus group 1)

From the responses, pupils demonstrate some negative perceptions about small group work because if one is unable to contribute to group work, they are at risk of not being recognised as a member of the group. However, pupils also give positive perceptions about small group work because they acknowledge that they receive support, specifically in spelling, vocabulary and reading and because they are able to use their L1 as support when necessary.

4.13 Focus Group 2

In the second focus group, 7 pupils participated and letters A, B, C, D, E, F and G were used to refer to these pupils. In focus group 2, I decided to include a monolingual English speaking pupil because it was my opinion at the time that given the whole school policy of using small group work as a strategy to include and support all pupils, there needed to be a representative from the body of monolingual English speaking pupils in the school. Pupils were made aware of the research and my reasons for doing it and this monolingual English speaker expressed an interest in sharing her perceptions.

During the second focus group discussion, I directly asked pupils for their perceptions about peer-peer interaction; if it is useful to their learning and if they felt they benefitted from interactive opportunities during small group work in mainstream lessons. Regarding group work, overall pupils' perception was that it was positive for them because they had the opportunity to solicit help from their peers. The pupils' utterances are redolent of collaboration, learning from and with each other and peer-peer

support. Pupils speak about pooling ideas and increasing their learning and understanding from having a peer explain or present another point of view.

As with the first focus group discussion, pupils' were recorded using a voice-recorder and this was then transcribed. The transcriptions were read and common themes identified. I again decided to present the results in themes for presentation, analysis and discussion. The themes are "subject support", "language support", "socialising and making friends".

4.13.1 Subject support

"It helps because if you do something wrong, mistake, they can correct you.

They also maybe can advise you and give you some ideas." (Pupil A)

Pupils shared the perception that interaction during group work helps them to understand the content of the lesson, learn new language and gain exposure to the opinions and views of their peers. In several of the pupil's contributions, there is mention of "each other" and "other people" suggesting that pupils are very aware of connecting and collaborating with their peers. There is also a sense of awareness on the part of the pupils that they require support which can be supplied through interaction with their peers,

"Group work is important because they always work in team in the lessons and if maybe for finish quickly or share your opinion with others in the groups" (Pupil B)

"Interaction is very important at lesson because you can get information from each other and they can help if you communicate with some other people." (Pupil C)

“Group work is important because if you don’t know nothing the other people is helping you.” (Pupil D)

“Yes it is helpful because if everyone gives their ideas you can put your thoughts and theirs and use it in your work” (Pupil G)

“It is useful because it helps if others don’t understand or get what to do. It also helps get others point of you”. (Pupil A)

Above are several of the ways in which pupils explain why they believe that group work is beneficial and helpful. They refer to the support that can be shared amongst peers and how the understanding manifested by others can clarify misconceptions. Through their words, pupils reveal their concern about their school work and their desire for support to access the curriculum which can, as they verbalize be tendered by peers.

Pupil E commented,

“I think it is very good idea and it would be really helpful and useful talking about the work and if someone is scared or something to tell the teacher or ask the teacher something, it would be great to talk about it with the group.” (Pupil E, focus group 2)

From these words, the comfort and assurance found through working with peers is evident and pupils imply peer over teacher support. Taking interaction to mean the exchange of information in face-to-face communication through which pupils collaborate, support and learn from each other, I examined the data from pupils where they confirmed that there is an exchange of information during small group work and that this act enables them to be confident participants in their classroom learning experiences. In the words of pupils,

“I think interaction is useful as people help each other telling hints to them”

(Pupil F)

“I think it is better to interact with people as I get help and find out better.”

(Pupil B)

“I think it kind of helps when we talk in groups. It will help me because if when I get stuck someone can tell me how to do it.” (Pupil A)

“I think it is useful when we interact during the lesson so that we can understand what we are doing and ask others for help.” (Pupil C)

“I find it better when I work and speak to M or someone about the work because it gives me help.” (Pupil E)

4.13.2 Socialising and making friends

“But you work with other students you might not get on and you’ll be shy to talk to them and more and less work at the same both and you can make friends at the same time” (Pupil A)

“I think that interaction is important because you can share ideas and see other opinions of people and can even make new friends by interacting with other people in class.” (Pupil C)

The opportunity to socialise and make friends is perceived by pupils as a by-product of small group interaction. Pupils are of the view that through sharing and collaborating on learning tasks, they can initiate and strengthen friendship links and one pupil extended her thought to include preparation for working life, “Working with other people is very good because you must learn to interact with others in the future with your business.” (Pupil E)

4.13.3 Language support

“Interaction is important because it can improve your language and the other important when we learning is precisely that is joined management of learning.” (Pupil C)

The quote above reflects the perception of one pupil who also believes that interaction with peers during classroom based learning can facilitate language learning.

“if you communicate it’s improve your language and your learning skills.”

(Pupil E)

“I think interaction is important in lessons because most of the students don’t know the language and the students help each other.” (Pupil A)

Although most pupils had a positive perception about working and interacting in small groups during mainstream lessons, of those who took part in the focus group discussion, a few expressed negative perceptions regarding a small group setting and its potential to facilitate progression in learning. Pupil G’s thought is telling,

“I think you should not interact so then you can see the students independent progress and to see how much they improved and if you work in a group you have so much help and how do you know if they just copied off one person and then the child who is copying won’t learn anything.” (Pupil G)

Throughout the discussion, pupil G was quiet and this was her only point. Like pupil G, pupil A also expressed a negative sentiment though earlier on, she had identified positive perceptions of small group work showing two

sides to the theme of the discussion, “Sometimes we concentrate and produce better work when we are alone.” (Pupil A)

4.14 Documentary Analysis

In this section, responses to the questionnaires and interviews will be explored to examine the degree to which they uphold, maintain and reflect the school’s EAL policy. Three headings “pupils’ use of L1 during mainstream lessons, “group work” and “interaction” will be used to highlight the findings.

4.14.1 Pupils’ use of L1 during mainstream lessons

The school’s EAL policy advocates the use of the L1 during mainstream lessons but advises teachers that its use should be planned and managed. This means that the teacher has to decide if and when the L1 should be allowed, if its use will support knowledge construction and whether the same task could be carried out through using only English. Teacher 3 demonstrates that he is aware of the benefit that the use of the L1 could give a pupil but also reveals that he will readily re-arrange a seating or grouping situation if he feels that pupils are not, during the course of their work, using English,

“I am also aware of that fact that sometimes if you put friends together, they don’t practise the English so I, most cases will separate them until there is a specific task that I want them to do that I feel they sitting together will benefit them better than sitting apart”
(Teacher 3, interview)

Further on, when teacher 3 was asked if he ensured that NAEP are grouped with peers who can provide a good model of English, the response was,

“The rule is you don’t speak your native language in class. If that happens, then I wouldn’t pair a student with that particular student again.” (Teacher 3, interview)

The school’s EAL policy does not forbid the use of the L1 in mainstream lessons. Unlike teacher 3, when Teacher 4 was asked if he planned group work in mainstream English lessons, he explained that where there is a need for same language peers to collaborate and use their L1, then this will be allowed. Teacher 4 stated,

“I do and I try to pair, if it is pair work or if it is group work to change to mix students, not use the same group over and over so I try to have sometimes the same speaker, the same language speaker, that they speak the language so they can explain if I feel the task needs to be explained in the first language and if another student is able but sometimes I feel they need to be mixed and they need to be separated from those who speak the same language and they have to interact within the different language groups, of course talking in English because it will give them more confidence of course depending on the task, yes.” (Teacher 4, Interview)

Teacher 4 does not explicitly state that the L1 should not be used but from his reasoning, it is clear that he both manages and has boundaries for its use in mainstream lessons. Teacher 4 also touches on the subject of mixing learners of different linguistic backgrounds,

“Oh, I think that is crucial that they actually interact with those pupils we believe they would learn from them, monolingual pupils that provide a good model of English.”
(Teacher 4, Interview)

It is essential that NAEP have the opportunity to socialise and communicate with their English speaking peers as well as those of other linguistic

backgrounds. This is not only for their social development but also for pupils to become independent, to try to phrase and re-phrase utterances with other speakers and listeners as they develop their skills in English (DCSF, 2007).

4.14.2 Group work

As a means of engaging pupils and fostering learning, small group interaction has come to be appreciated as one of the strategies that mainstream teachers should adapt. Guidance from government documents such as the New Arrivals Excellence Programme (DCSF, 2008) encourages the use of group work as a means of creating an inclusive environment in which learners feel comfortable to participate and share in learning. This stance is reflected in the school's EAL policy as a teaching and learning strategy where teachers are encouraged to "provide plenty of small group collaborative activities where listening and talking are central to learning" (Appendix1, EAL Policy)

The perceptions of mainstream teachers regarding group work come across in their interviews. Teacher 1 shares that she sometimes plans for group work but it depends on the type of activity that the class is doing. With pupils preparing for terminal examinations, for example, teacher 1 states, "I found that with GCSE pupils, sometimes I will not plan group work". (Teacher 1, interview)

Teacher 1 also states that behaviour can sometimes be a hindrance to effective group work, “behaviours sometimes within those groups do not encourage other pupils to learn.” (Teacher 1, interview)

Teacher 1 acknowledges that, for her, the learning task and goal will determine if group work is a suitable means to achieving learning. Teacher 1 explores her perceptions of group work even further by noting the benefits and drawbacks of small group interaction. For her, there are more opportunities for pupils to talk to and learn from each other. Equally important is the view that the level of understanding within the group can act as a barrier to speaking,

“Yes, there are more opportunities, there are certainly more opportunities to talk to each other and to learn from each other. ('), it also depends on the level of understanding within the group as well. Some pupils might find it rather daunting to speak for the first time in a language which is, (') not for the first time but you know to speak in a language they are not familiar with so sometimes it might be a bit daunting but depending on the level of understanding ('), the ones that *really really struggle*, group work usually is not for them” (Teacher 1, interview)

Although teacher 1 has identified that she implements the school’s suggestion regarding small group work, it is carefully considered to take into account the learning task, group dynamics or behaviour and the level of understanding of pupils.

Teacher 2, on the other hand, admits that she prefers independent rather than group work but acknowledges that if she is implementing group work, for NAEP, it will be with,

“people who I know will give them a chance to speak cause if I don’t do that, they’ll be left, pushed out of a group and stronger characters won’t even give them a chance to speak.” (Teacher 2, interviews)

In the interviews, no teacher makes explicit reference to the school’s EAL policy. Although paper and electronic versions are held in a central location which is accessible by all staff, the lack of mention or specific reference to the policy give the impression that staff are unaware of the existence of the policy or of what it contains.

The TAs did not make explicit mention of the school’s EAL policy in their responses but it was evident in some of their statements that through their daily practices, they were upholding aspects of the policy.

4.14.3 Interaction

Some of these aspects outline the importance of interaction for EAL pupils and the need to plan for interactive opportunities. TA 2 stated,

“EAL students are, they will talk and interact with other peers easier if they are in a smaller group and interaction goes better and member of staff assigned to the group, I think it is got more ability to explain the task to students in more details and have the feedback from the students that they can lead the conversation or whatever task easy if it is a written, then they can do the pair work and depending on the work and the subject really.” (TA 2 interview)

TA 1, in response to the question about whether she thought that EAL pupils are able to interact with peers who can provide a good model of English replied,

“They don’t always, they don’t always because most of the time I find that the EAL learners are all sat together and they and some of them, they speak very little English. Others speak a little bit more but I feel that if the child is sat next to an English speaking learner, then they get more chance to develop their English.” (TA 1 interview)

Here the TA is intimating that forming same language groups may not always open interactive opportunities in which pupils are able to engage in English. Based on this TA’s perception, sitting with English language speaking peers is more advantageous to the development of EAL pupils’ English. TA 1’s experience in mainstream lessons reveals evidence of group work but these groups are often solely composed of EAL learners. TA 1 maintains her perception on the role that interaction plays in language development and when the interviewer asked,

“Do you believe that interaction, we touched on this before, do you believe that interaction helps our EAL pupils to develop their skills in English?”

TA 1 replied,

“Yes, it does because they are in an English speaking environment, they must, I feel that it, they do learn words. They might not learn full sentences but they do learn words from other students.” (TA 1, interview)

4.15 Summary of the Findings

The data shows that teachers do welcome the inclusion of NAEP in their classes but are concerned about issues such as workload and time constraints which may not allow them to adequately plan and provide for language development. Regarding small group work, teachers’ responses

demonstrate that group work is utilised for different purposes depending on the task, a pupil's level of competency in English and behaviour management.

From the perspective of the pupils, small group work for them is beneficial because of the peer-peer support but there is an equal chance that they might be excluded from a group presentation or task if it is thought that their contribution to the task due to their limited proficiency in English was not meaningful and therefore unworthy of mention.

Of the 2 TAs interviewed and surveyed, TA 2 highlighted the benefits but equally demonstrates that there could be disadvantages depending on the structure and purposes for small group work. On the one hand, small group work can aid the social inclusion of a NAEP but on the other hand, teachers should carefully consider the composition of a group and the tasks assigned to avoid having learners who might not have the required language proficiency, subject knowledge or ability to collaborate and complete learning tasks.

TA 1 stated that she would welcome seeing more group tasks in lessons and better collaboration with the subject teacher or instruction as to how, as a TA, she can effectively support pupils' learning and language development when supporting small group work. TA 1 also noted that small group work allows pupils more time to focus on the lesson content.

Regarding the guidance documents and policies, small group work as a teaching and learning strategy and the use of the L1 in mainstream lessons are two areas where advice and guidelines are given. In many ways, teachers and TAs uphold these guidelines and advice.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

“Interaction helps you to understand peoples’ experiences and their lifestyle and also if you work on your own you will not get to hear anyone else’s opinion and perspective.” (Year 9 pupil from Norway)

5.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, the major issues arising from the results of the survey, the focus group discussions and the interviews will be explored. I will reflect on the findings in light of the theoretical background and literature underpinning small group work and additional language learning in mainstream classrooms.

The research sought answers to this overarching question:

What are the perceptions of teachers, teaching assistants and pupils about small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils?

To simplify and direct the research path, the following four sub-questions were formulated:

- 1) What are teachers’ perceptions about the inclusion of newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons?
- 2) What are teachers’ perceptions about small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils?

3) What are teaching assistants' perceptions about small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils?

4) What are EAL pupils' perceptions about small group work?

The findings will be discussed in themes with the differences in perceptions from pupils and stakeholders presented afterwards. In some instances, the perspectives of teachers and TAs will remain separate as these two groups of staff view the classroom from a different angle and background. The themes for the discussion are “inclusion of NAEP”, “language or subject content”, “teachers’ perceptions about small group work for NAEP”, “pupils’ use of L1”, “pupils’ perceptions about small group work”, “TAs’ perceptions about small group work for NAEP”, “curriculum concerns”, “assessment concerns”, “NAEPs’ contribution to small group work”, “staff professional development” and “workload and planning”.

5.2 Inclusion of NAEP

Overall, the teachers who participated in this research held positive perceptions about the inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons and this was demonstrated by 84.2% or 16 teachers agreeing to statement 5 of section B, “I welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils in my classes.” Even though there are positive perceptions of inclusion, only 11 teachers or 57.9% agree to Statement 1, “The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream classes benefits all students.” 31.6% or 6 teachers neither agree nor disagree with Statement 1.

This demonstrates that although teachers welcome the inclusion of NAEP, they are not entirely convinced that this benefits all pupils. All pupils include the settled EAL pupils or advanced bilinguals who no longer or do not need targeted language support and the monolingual English speaking pupils.

Reeves (2004) and Pettit (2008) conducted studies which demonstrated that some teachers were unsympathetic towards the needs of NAEP and felt that efforts to integrate and provide for such pupils were unnecessary and a drain on teachers' time. In Pettit's study, 53% of the 106 teachers who completed a questionnaire felt that the inclusion of ELLs in their lessons increased their workload, 50% agreed that it was difficult for mainstream teachers to find time to deal with the needs of ELLs while 54% thought that ELLs should not be included in mainstream lessons until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.

The study by Reeves (2004, p.54) focused on 3 teachers, one of whom saw,

“his classroom as a practice ground for life beyond high school. Because ELLs would not be given special treatment outside school, they should not be given special treatment in school. To Neal, this meant ELLs had to be able to function as EP students. He made no alteration in curriculum, instruction, or assessment for ELLs. "I want all of my kids to function on a level plane," Neal explained (interview, November 2, 2001, p. 7), and an essential aspect of the level plane, in Neal's view, was being a proficient English speaker. "It's not like you're going to wear a badge that says 'English is not my first language, be patient'" (Reeves, 2004, p.54)

Of the 3 teachers interviewed by Reeves, 1 tried to make modifications to classwork but overall, all 3 teachers believed that for ELLs to be treated equally, they should face the same assessments, instructions and expectations as those set for native English speakers (Reeves, 2004).

5.2.1 Mainstreaming and inclusion concerns

As discussed in the literature review, UK government policy advocates mainstreaming as the best place for NAEP to learn English and stipulates that teachers are responsible for making suitable provisions for every pupil by “adapting their teaching to the strengths and needs of all pupils” (DfE, 2012b, p.8; DCSF, 2007). The school’s EAL policy which is influenced by government policies and guidelines advocates mainstreaming and places the responsibility on teachers to develop and plan lessons that meet the language and academic requirements of all pupils.

If teachers are questioning their ability to act proficiently in light of these guidelines, an area for discussion should then centre on the reasons teachers feel inadequate to reflect policy guidelines in their practice. Mainstreaming, inclusion and teaching language through the subject content are considered the best ways of providing for linguistically and culturally diverse pupils as opposed to withdrawal groups and separate language classes (Pim, 2012; Wardman, 2012; DCSF, 2007).

However, this policy has been criticized for its lack of focus on and the development of additional language learning. (Barwell, 2005). Barwell (2005, p.144) argued that the policy of mainstreaming views language as a

form of “access”, that language is separated from subject content, is seen as a “portal” and both subject and language are static. Barwell (2005) seems to be suggesting that where there is not a separate and distinct language focus, there is a threat that language development will not occur. This is also seen in the perceptions of those teachers who are doubtful about including NAEP in mainstream lessons when they query whether they should teach language or subject content.

Based on the findings of this study, whilst teachers in this school welcome inclusion, they are not convinced that it is meeting the needs of all pupils and this also came across in responses to the open questions of the questionnaire and in the interviews. The teachers who expressed uncertainty in this regard are not viewing themselves as language teachers or as being responsible for the linguistic progress of pupils. They are articulating a distinction between subject content and language.

The reasons cited by teachers from this research for this ambivalence are the difficulties in making provision for all pupils, the conflict over whether to concentrate on language or subject content and teacher preparedness to deal with the social, linguistic and cultural diversity in mainstream classrooms that are more and more multilingual and multicultural.

5.2.2 Language concerns

NAEP have an urgent need to learn English and the type of language that is needed for academic progress and success in school. In the literature review, the point was made that pupils could be supported to use academic language in interactive tasks during small group work (Storch and Aldosari, 2012; Gibbons, 2006). Tasks requiring this level of interaction require careful thought, planning and attentive supervision to ensure that both language and subject goals are being met (Haynes and Zacarian, 2010; McDonough, 2004). Pupils have to be prepared, teachers have to be trained to prepare not just lesson resources but the skills that pupils need to take part in group work.

Small group work is just one of a variety of approaches that can be used with learners and teachers' expression of concern about its usefulness with NAEP is conveyed in their responses and a reflection of their perception is exemplified in the response given by teacher 3 in section E of the open section of the questionnaire,

“The main challenge I face with newly arrived EAL pupils is building a lesson which meets their needs as well as meeting the needs of the other students in the group. I am often concerned about singling them out in a way which could isolate them and make them feel different. However this may mean that newly arrived EAL pupils are not making sufficient progress in my lessons.” (Teacher 3, section E of the teacher questionnaire)

The majority of teachers surveyed welcome NAEP in mainstream lessons but they have identified issues that they feel constrain and hamper their efforts to provide for them. Based on the findings of this study, NAEP in

need of intensive language input and support might be seen to be hindering the progress of other pupils' subject knowledge which is one of the reasons some teachers would question whether inclusion benefits all pupils. By stating that she does not want pupils to "feel different," teacher 3's quote above also reflects the emotional well-being of pupils and the academic progress that all pupils are expected to make.

This leads me to highlight teacher preparedness to deal with and manage mainstream classes with NAEP. Along with their own pedagogical knowledge and skills, teachers ought to be aware of not just linguistic but the social, emotional and cultural needs of their pupils (Haneda, 2009).

5.2.3 Concerns about educational background

Other reasons cited by teachers for questioning inclusion are some pupils' lack of previous education or lack of familiarity with certain concepts or topics in a subject discipline. There are times when NAEP have had little or no experience of formal education or are unfamiliar with the academic content of some curriculum areas as noted by teacher 9 section E of the questionnaire where teachers were asked to identify some of the challenges that they face in mainstream lessons, "It's not so much being an EAL pupil but the lack of scholarisation due to various reasons." (Teacher 9, section E of the teacher questionnaire) Here, Teacher 9 makes reference to the inclusion of pupils who are either experiencing formal schooling for the first time or spent a long period out of education.

At the school where this research took place and at the time data was collected, there is a handful of pupils who are experiencing full time education for the first time. Although teachers make known their concerns and challenges teaching NAEP in mainstream lessons, during the interviews and open section of the questionnaire, they do not voice thoughts of pupils being excluded from mainstream lessons due to their level of proficiency in English or lack of previous education.

In a study conducted by Reeves (2004, p.55), one of the teachers surveyed objected to the presence of pupils with limited English in mainstream lessons and suggested that they should first learn English in “newcomer centres.” In section B of the questionnaire used in the present study 63.2% or 12 teachers agreed to statement 2, “EAL pupils should not be included in mainstream lessons until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.” So, although teachers were not prepared to verbalize this, they indicated their perception through the anonymous questionnaire. Because of my insider position, it is possible that during face-to-face interviews, the teachers refrained from expressing what they truly believed.

5.2.4 Challenges of inclusion

During the interviews, some teachers took the opportunity to air challenges encountered during mainstream lessons. When asked about his experiences with EAL pupils in mainstream lessons, Teacher 2 reflected on the challenge faced by some pupils who are unfamiliar with subject content. Teacher 2 stated,

“The only problem some of them face or might face is a situation where there is a different concept in Maths that has not been taught in their country before.” (Teacher 2, interview)

These statements highlight just two of the issues that teachers have to consider regarding the suitability of inclusion for all pupils and as they try to adapt their teaching to meet the strengths and needs of all pupils and to fulfil the teachers’ standards. Above, Teacher 2’s perception is that for some NAEP, their main difficulty in Mathematics might stem from not having been exposed to some topics before their arrival in the UK.

Because of these and other challenges, teachers are therefore compelled to deliberate on how to focus the teaching of their academic discipline. This is further evidenced by teachers’ responses to the first question in section E of the questionnaire, “What are some of the challenges that you face with newly arrived EAL pupils in your classes?” Teacher 1 noted,

“Knowing what to focus on in terms of the curriculum. i.e. when teaching a topic is it better to keep teaching the subject with scaffolding for pupils and hope they pick some of it up even if they can’t understand vocabulary or articulate exactly what they know or is it better to teach language skills and focus less heavily on the curriculum?” (Teacher 12, section E of the questionnaire)

Further along teacher 12 lists as her challenges,

“Seating plan, friendship group, level of knowledge to assess, background to know about, differentiation required, resource suitability.” (Teacher 12, section E of the questionnaire)

These responses provide a wealth of information regarding the myriad issues faced by teachers as they try to prepare for and adapt their lessons to

meet the needs of NAEP and could supply reasons for teachers' ambivalence towards the inclusion of NAEP.

In the US, Reeves (2004) conducted a year- long study with four mainstream secondary teachers and found that while they do welcome EAL pupils, they share concerns such as how to adapt work to meet their needs. The findings of the present study share similarities with that conducted by Reeves (2004) in that the teachers grapple with the practical aspects of inclusion in the mainstream such as modification of classwork, assessment and blending content and language instruction. The concerns voiced by the teachers in the present study are based on their everyday experiences as they attempt to accommodate NAEP.

What is largely missing from their communication though is the need for a variation in practice to reflect the changing pupil population who are bringing with them other identities, cultural backgrounds and knowledge. In Section E of the questionnaire in answer to strategies used with NAEP, teacher 12 implies this with the statement "background to know about" while teacher 17 responds "use autobiography to increase students' confidence."

Aside from these comments, most teachers seem unaware of the recommendations to look inwards at what the educational system is offering pupils, investigate pupils' existing knowledge and skills and use these as building blocks to instigate reaction and engagement on the part of the pupils. Gravelle (2005) refers to this as the cognitive aspect of inclusion,

which is providing work that will lead to progress and including content in which pupils see themselves reflected.

Certainly, teachers have to operate within the confines of the NC but where there are spaces to adapt and redefine subject content while strengthening and teaching new skills, the opportunity must be grasped in order to avoid excluding NAEP. In the case of Ireland, Kelly (2013) wrote about the need to infuse language acquisition theory and evolving pedagogical practices in multilingual circumstances into daily classroom practice. To add to this, I see the need for mainstream teachers regardless of their academic discipline to embark on intense training in language acquisition in compulsory professional development programmes (de Jong et al., 2013).

At another level, the inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons continues to raise important questions not just about the preparation of teachers to meet their needs but also the availability of other adults to provide in class support (de Jong et al, 2013; Mistry and Sood, 2010; Cajkler and Hall, 2009). These challenges or barriers to inclusion signal the need to provide training to teachers so that they feel better equipped to support EAL pupils in their lessons and is a point that is reflected upon by teachers in their responses to the open questions in section E of the questionnaire as has been shown.

Linked to this is standard 5 of the Teachers' Standards states that teachers must "adapt teaching to the needs of the pupils and have a clear understanding of their needs" (DfE, 2012, p.8). Equally, TAs or any other

adult providing support or facilitating teaching and learning should be empowered through quality training to understand how to engage in partnership teaching and planning to effectuate academic and linguistic progression (Creese, 2005a). In the school context of this research, the need for shared planning time was touched upon by Teacher 9 and by TA 1. Teacher 9 calls for more TAs whereas TA 1 expresses her desire for more planning time with mainstream teachers. Teacher 9 considered the lack of planning time and the unavailability of TAs to provide support in mainstream classrooms as two of her challenges,

“More teaching assistants are needed to work with subject teachers and pupils. Too often, subject teachers have to "juggle" to cater to all the different levels and abilities in their lessons. In an ideal world, small groups would be great...and we could better help the EAL pupils to adapt better to mainstream.” (Teacher 9, Section E of the Questionnaire)

The school’s EAL policy (Appendix 1) and in accordance with the government’s stance, states that the language and academic needs of EAL pupils should be met in their mainstream classes. While in practice, pupils are in mainstream classes in this school, the perceptions of the teachers who participated in the interviews and survey suggests that there are instances where, due to varying levels of proficiency in English, lack of familiarity with certain aspects of subject disciplines and cognitive ability the needs of all pupils are not necessarily met.

This therefore signifies that in practice, school and policy guidelines are not always met or are only partially covered. So, even though the school has

initiated the use of small group work as a technique to provide for NAEP, there are other aspects to be considered and embedded such as shared planning time for TAs and teachers. When asked whether she had ever had the opportunity to plan and organize group work with the class teacher, TA 1 replied, “No, I’ve never had the chance or opportunity to do so.” (TA 1, interview)

As discussed in the literature review, group work can provide an appropriate social context for language practice and development (Storch and Aldosari, 2012; Gibbons, 2006; Gravelle, 2005). To optimize the conditions under which small group work can prove beneficial, the adults working with children in mainstream classrooms should best have opportunities to train and to plan together.

5.2.5 Partnership Teaching

The “partnership teaching” model which is one of the ways in which mainstreaming is expected to provide for EAL pupils and meet the needs of linguistically diverse pupils cannot always be fulfilled especially in cases where there is insufficient staff and a lack of funding (NALDIC, 2011). At the national and LA, financial cuts mean that in many areas, schools suffer from not having expertise from the LA and lack the financial resources to adequately deploy staff that could collaborate on joint planning and partnership teaching (Safford and Drury, 2013; NALDIC, 2011). Partnership teaching is where the language specialist works alongside the subject teacher to plan and sometimes deliver the curriculum subject (Creese, 2005a; Brentnall, 2009).

5.2.6 Financial Constraints

In other cases, budget cuts have forced restrictions on the programmes that schools can put in place for EAL pupils (NALDIC, 2011). These funding issues have affected the provision for NAEP at the school where this research was undertaken mainly through the lack of staff to provide targeted language support in mainstream lessons or to collaborate with subject teachers who are getting accustomed to having NAEP in their lessons.

5.2.7 Planning Time

During the interview, teacher 3 identified planning as one of the challenges faced by teachers in their attempts to adequately provide for NAEP in mainstream lessons and to uphold Standard 5 of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012).

“I think one of them is planning. It takes more time to plan and when you have a very busy day, the challenge is, are you able to plan for every class the way it is expected to be planned? That is one challenge”. (Teacher 3, interview)

In a study to investigate the language development of bilingual pupils, Cameron, et al. (1996) found that teachers were concerned about the threat to their teaching and planning time if they were to pay more attention to language development. Like the teachers in the study by Cameron, et al. (1996), the perception of teachers who supplied data for this research was that the inclusion of NAEP was a threat to their planning time. This could be an indication that teachers need to know how to incorporate a language focus with content teaching.

The simultaneous development of academic language and subject content is espoused as an ideal strategy, one where pupils are shown the functions of language in relation to the subject discipline with the aim that they are subsequently able to demonstrate this when they interpret and articulate their oral and written responses in their manipulation of content (Gibbons, 2009; Arkoudis, 2005; Barwell; 2005). The integration of academic language and subject content features in some teacher's reflections about their planning and teaching but the fact that it poses a dilemma to some is a testament to the urgent call for training and professional development for teaching and support staff.

5.2.8 Positive Encounters

Although faced with a variety of challenges, teacher 1, for example, highlighted positive encounters and experiences with EAL pupils,

“There have also been positive in that believe it or not, I have been able to learn some kind of educational structures in different countries” Some pupils (' ') actually quite high achievers but then there is that language barrier. I would like to refer again to another one of my pupils who went and topped the results for this school because he came in as an EAL learner. He struggled at first but once he got the language, it was just taking off from there”. (Teacher 1, interview)

Teacher 2 explained how, through her contact and interactions with EAL pupils, her perceptions changed over the course of the school year,

“I realize that some of them can have tragic backgrounds and also that sometimes I do stereotype. Honestly, now I realize that I have to take a bit of time before I assess how far I can push them because I really did and I am ashamed to admit it, think that they weren't necessarily quick learners. I didn't realize that some could acquire

the skills, depending on the background, put them all into one category like dyslexia. It's wrong". (Teacher 2, interview)

To reiterate, the evidence from the data collected is that teachers do welcome EAL pupils in their mainstream lessons and are largely positive about their efforts to welcome them but are concerned that they may not be able to adequately provide for their varied needs due to the reasons discussed above. Above, two teachers have identified positive aspects in their own personal growth that inclusion has enabled them to make.

As evidence of teachers' efforts to include and make adequate provision for pupils, on the questionnaire, teacher 11 explains one of her strategies for welcoming NAEP,

"I sit them close to me (telling them in a few weeks they can choose where they would like to sit). This gives me an indicator (sometimes they do not want to move)." (Teacher 11, Section E of the questionnaire)

Other strategies mentioned in section E of the questionnaire include this comment from teacher 17,

"Introduction to other students. Use autobiography to increase students confidence. Offer to provide extra support if student is interested." (Teacher 17, section E of the questionnaire)

From both statements, pupils are seen to have a voice and the opportunity to make decisions in terms of where to sit and the amount of support that they would like. An autobiographical approach as mentioned by teacher 17 encourages pupils to use their life stories as a starting point that can be further developed in a subject discipline. This approach draws on prior

knowledge and life experiences so that a pupil, whatever their proficiency in English and their L1, can talk or write about themselves.

This approach has been recommended as a strategy to engage EAL pupils (Mehmedbegović, 2012; Cummins et. al., 2005). Teacher 2 similarly explains that, where possible, she uses their cultural and historical background to engage pupils,

“I try to engage them by using examples from their culture or background as well as refer to the history/geography of the country they are from.” (Teacher 2, section E of the questionnaire)

Moreover, approaches like these are also considered cognitively appropriate in spite of the language challenges (Mehmedbegović, 2012, p.69; Gravelle, 2005). While teachers have a positive perception of the inclusion of NAEP in their mainstream lessons, it is necessary to again point out the need for pedagogical training to allay the concerns of teachers who feel ill-equipped to adequately accommodate NAEP.

Practices such as small group work which are already being used to make mainstream classrooms more inclusively attractive are elements of sociocultural theory which is one of the concepts used as a guideline to underpin the findings and discussions. Aside from the academic necessities, the sociocultural development of NAEP is an additional priority. Working in small groups has the benefits of interaction, collaboration and cooperation which can support socio-cultural development (Wardman, 2012).

5.3 Language or subject content

“Some do experience frustration where the work needs to be simplified for language purposes and then does not challenge their intellect”. (Teacher 14, section E of the teacher questionnaire)

With regards to whether language and subject content should be separated, successive government guidelines assume that “language and literacy skills” will be simultaneously developed with subject content knowledge (DfE 2012a; DfES, 2005). However, this guideline does not appear to recognize the fact that some pupils arrive with little or no previous knowledge in their L1 and studies have shown that the lack of L1 literacy can affect the rate at which and the manner in which that learner processes and learns an additional language (Bialystok, 2001; Cummins et. al., 2005).

For pupils with limited L1 proficiency, the process of learning an additional language can be a more challenging one than if they already had age appropriate language and literacy skills in another language (Garcia, 2009; Kramsch, 2009). Teacher 2 noted this as a challenge in section E of the questionnaire, “Lack of general knowledge in their first (mother tongue) language” (Teacher 2, Section E of questionnaire)

The conflict between language and academic content is an aspect which appears in research studies where EAL is discussed (Coelho, 2012; Arkoudis, 2005). Explicit attention to linguistic form and function is one of the ways in which EAL pupils can be exposed to the formal elements of English (Lucas et al., 2008). By focusing on the language forms and

linguistic structures related to their discipline, subject teachers of History, for example, can teach the past tense in the context of a History lesson.

As part of their professional development, teachers therefore need to know how to separate the language forms and structures from the subject content and how to teach these as part of their disciplines (Brentnall, 2009; Clegg, 2007). The language demands of the curriculum can become barriers to learning and progress if teachers are not aware of the different levels and types of language, what each pupil needs and how to incorporate these aspects in their mainstream lessons.

Recommendations from research carried out by Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron (2011) and Cameron (2002) suggest that teachers need to be knowledgeable about academic language in their subject areas and use this knowledge to plan opportunities for language development in both the macro-scaffolding and micro-scaffolding stages of a lesson. Macro-scaffolding refers to the planning stages of a lesson while micro-scaffolding is the "moment to moment unfolding" of teaching and learning activities in the classroom (Cameron, 2002, p. 7).

Academic language refers to the register related to subject content that pupils need in order to excel in school (Schleppegrell and O'Hallaron, 2011; Valdes, 2004). NAEP with little or no English often require language support and must be given the opportunity to acquire and to use academic language if they are to develop proficiency across the language skills.

Interacting during small group work is one of the ways in which pupils can develop their academic language and this can be carried out through asking questions, exchanging and presenting information and problem solving related to specific tasks. The mainstream teacher utilizing small group work as a strategy has to craft and mould lesson activities so that when pupils engage in them, they are driven to interact. Mainstream teachers in turn require training in how to create learning and teaching contexts that will develop the language necessary for academic success.

Although most of the teachers surveyed for this study held positive perceptions and are ready to embrace the challenges of working with NAEP, in their practices they are often hampered by government policies that prescribe what needs to be done without offering the means to engage action. Thus the constraints of a prescribed curriculum which in turn can influence the amount and type of provision that schools can offer are in many ways preventing classroom practitioners from exhibiting the types of practices needed to propel pupils towards social and educational development and progress.

At the time of writing, where assessment of knowledge and skills are concerned, the NC which is the one followed by the school where this research was conducted does not make exceptions for pupils who do not have English as a first language (NALDIC, 2013; Leung, 2009). EAL pupils are assessed alongside their English proficient peers and have to sit examinations in a language they are learning with no consideration given to

the length of time that they have spent learning the language of education. So, for them to be deemed successful, they have to learn English and learn to apply it in an academic context simultaneously.

Nationally, the language barrier is seen as one of the “key factors affecting the performance of EAL pupils” (Demie 2013, p.2). At the international level, it has been recognized that pupils who do not speak the language of instruction face a disadvantage in school but that “investment in language support measures will likely reduce the disadvantage” (Christensen and Stanat, 2007, p.4). Schools such as the one where this research was undertaken are therefore in a bind; they have to put in place support measures for pupils despite financial constraints, adequately prepare staff to deal with the language needs of pupils and at the same time are preoccupied with attainment targets and examination results.

With the large population of NAEP, settled EAL or advanced bilingual and English proficient pupils who still need support as they prepare for external examinations, teachers are clearly going to be concerned about how to teach their curriculum subjects while ensuring that each pupil acquires the necessary academic language skills to make progress.

In a study conducted by Cameron et al. (1996) which investigated the language demands made on pupils through tasks and interactions that they have been given, it was noted that at the secondary level, some mainstream classrooms may not be effectively developing the language skills of EAL pupils (Cameron et al., 1996). The recommendations of Cameron’s study

identified the need for training for teachers so that they can understand the language demands of their subjects and how to transform these into language development opportunities for their pupils.

One of the ways in which the mainstream classroom can develop the language skills of pupils is through promoting small group work but with careful planning to ensure pupil-pupil interaction and participation. Major (2008) noted that opportunities must be created in order that pupils experience meaningful interaction in mainstream lessons. Major (2008) and Miller (2003) argued against assuming that simply because a pupil is in a mainstream classroom is sufficient reason to infer that interaction leading to language development will occur. This need to empower mainstream teachers to create opportunities to effectively deliver language and content has also been voiced by de Jong et al (2013), Brentnall (2009) and Lucas et al. (2008).

In the survey and interviews that were done to collect data for this research, even though areas for professional development were mentioned, no teacher mentioned linguistic awareness. The necessity for mainstream teachers to enhance their linguistic awareness to enable them to incorporate instruction of language and form in their delivery of subject content is often highlighted (de Jong et al., 2013; Derewianka and Jones, 2010; Lucas et al., 2008).

Whilst researchers might highlight this need, from the evidence in this research, it would appear that mainstream teachers themselves are unaware of the type of knowledge or the specific knowledge about language that they

need in order to effectively address the needs of NAEP. The teachers are aware that they are in need of training but are unable to articulate or pinpoint the specific foci. Teachers' concerns over whether and how to teach language or subject content intersperses the responses to the interviews and the open section of the questionnaires demonstrating the level of importance that envelopes this matter.

5.4 Teachers' perceptions about small group work for NAEP

During the interview, when asked if, through small group work, pupils are able to develop their skills in English, Teacher 3 responded,

“('), they talk a lot more when they are working on a group task than when you the teacher is leading the lesson and they have to be picked to answer some questions (+) so when it comes to group work, it is an opportunity for them to express themselves.” (Teacher 3, interview)

Even though group work was being promoted at the school where this research was undertaken, from the interviews, in contrast to Teacher 3, Teacher 1 has mixed perceptions about group work and shared that she prefers paired work as opposed to group work,

“I think smaller groups actually tend to work better than groups say of 4 or 5 for the, for our EAL pupils so I tend to pair them up instead of making them into a group.” (Teacher 1, interview)

When asked about group work, teacher 2 responded,

“Yes, ('), I’m quite strict, I like work to be independent but where I think it does help is they may ask a peer or somebody they are sitting with.” (Teacher 2, interview)

Teacher 1 added that for pupils struggling with the lesson content and English language, teacher support or peer support in the form of a buddy would be ideal rather than a group environment,

“the ones that *really really struggle*, group work usually is not for them.” (Teacher 1, interview)

From the responses to the questionnaire, teachers’ perceptions about small group work for NAEP are based on whether they perceive opportunities for language practice during small group work. 15 teachers or 78.9% do agree to statement 1 of section C “Small group work has a positive effect on the achievement of pupils with EAL.” Likewise, to statement 4 of section C, “During small group work, there are more opportunities for language practice where 89.5% or 17 teachers agreed.

During the interview, when the following question “Do you think that group work helps? If yes, please say why and if no, please say why”, was asked, teacher 1 stated,

“....there are certainly more opportunities to talk to each other and to learn from each other.” (Teacher 1, interview)

In response to the same, teacher 3 commented that,

“ (+) it does help, it makes the children feel comfortable to express themselves because they are talking to other students. They are not

talking to you the teacher, neither are they talking to, in the presence of the entire class so it does help ah for them to feel at home and then for them to express their views, if they have done some mistakes, you could see others who would laugh about it but because they are friends, they laugh and they both laugh together and then you know try to correct themselves.” (Teacher 3, interview)

From these two comments and the results of the questionnaire, teachers’ perceptions are that being in a small group and interacting with peers can help pupils by providing opportunities to talk. This is corroborated by TA 1 who, from experience notes that,

“when they are within a smaller group, then they tend to say more or they tend to be able to hear more, listen more and get the opportunity to speak.” (TA 1, interview)

One pupil’s comment during the focus group, “We help each other”, is also evidence of the collaboration that can be had during small group work. In spite of the benefits that can be gained from being in a small group setting, it may not always be the ideal place for a NAEP with limited proficiency in English or any other pupil for reasons which include negative behaviour within groups, pupils’ perception of group work and how teachers facilitate group work and grouping strategies. As teacher 1 explains,

“Well really, it depends with the group dynamics. I mean in this school, I think contextually, (' ') it is a very challenging school and behaviours sometimes within those groups do not encourage other pupils to learn (' ') but then there are also that small pocket of pupils who I think are quite helpful when they are you know interacting with other EAL students within a group but generally I think smaller groups actually tend to work better than groups say of 4 or 5 for the, for our EAL pupils so I tend to pair them up instead of making them into a group”. (Teacher 1, interview)

Occasionally, negative pupil behaviour might hinder learning and progress. For a NAEP to feel safe and to thrive socially and academically they are best placed in an environment where they can observe good models of behaviour and learning and school leaders are called upon to cultivate this climate of positive behaviour (DCSF, 2008). Equally, if they are in a situation where they are not cognitively challenged and given language support to develop their CALP, behaviour issues and academic disengagement can occur. During the interview, teacher 1 gave one such example,

“I’ll give an example of one pupil that I taught some time back (‘ ’) they came in (‘ ’) as an EAL pupil ah but the group they were placed in was full of characters (‘ ’) when I first saw them, I thought this child was, (‘ ’) could get on to the language and understand it quite quickly, yes they did but what they picked up was not so positive. So it’s about modelling, the way in which behaviours and the language is modelled in the classroom that affects how they develop, I think.” (Teacher 1, interview)

To summarize, the perceptions of teachers and TAs are that small group interaction has its advantages but they also point out the disadvantages. These disadvantages include negative behaviour which can hinder productive group work. A solution or a way of managing this is for teachers to receive professional development on training all pupils to participate and collaborate in small group work. Amongst other points, professional development opportunities should include strategies for placing pupils in

groups. In the interview, teacher 2 outlines her strategy and reason for placing a pupil within a group,

“I group them with people who I know will give them a chance to speak cause if I don’t do that, they’ll be left, pushed out of a group and stronger characters won’t even give them a chance, cause if I’m judging them as well in listening and speaking”. (Teacher 2, interview)

This again raises the issue of teacher preparation and in this case, preparation to deal with and manage grouping strategies, language learning and subject content. Some aspects might be easier than others to implement but teachers are required to adapt and mould their lessons to meet the increasing diversity of their pupil population and in this case, use small group work (Coelho, 2012; Gearon et al. 2009). From teacher 2’s comment, we also see that this teacher has a strategy for organizing small group work within mainstream lessons.

When asked if they train or prepare pupils before they participate in small group work, these teachers again refer to assigning roles to pupils in small group work and their own rationale for small group work within their mainstream lessons,

“I have high expectations of group work so I do have what I call “Ambassador Learning”. I’ll expect them to shepherd their group (‘’) and coach their group through. I’ll expect there to be a leader, like a student police so I am careful how I choose that because otherwise they can see right into them.” (Teacher 2, interview)

“Well, sometimes if you’re giving them clearly defined roles within groups, you are going to be the scribe, you are going to maybe, one is going to be the person who feedbacks. It might just involve

someone actually just taking equipment for practical sessions from where it's located to the other side of the room. I tend to normally say, small simple tasks, the EAL pupils can do first and then they can, you know as they increase their confidence work on bigger tasks and so on." (Teacher 1, interview)

Simpson, Mercer and Majors (2010) mentioned the need for teachers to socialise pupils in classroom interaction and to train pupils in how to use talk to support their learning. This view is also shared by Haynes and Zacarian (2010) who additionally elaborated on making the physical layout of the classroom conducive to small group work. As one of the key areas in this research, teachers, TAs and NAEP were asked for their perceptions about the benefits and drawbacks of interaction during small group work. This was done through specific questions in the interviews and questionnaires.

On the questionnaire, for example, statement 12 "Small group work provides interactional opportunities for pupils with EAL" and statement 15 "Interaction during small group work supports the English language development of pupils with EAL" directly solicit views about interaction. To both statements, over 80% of teachers were in agreement. Although overall, teachers consider a small group setting and interaction within it as one of the ways in which NAEP can be included and supported, they have also identified some drawbacks and highlighted areas to attend to when deciding to implement small group work as a teaching and learning strategy.

Based on observations made by teacher 8, the question arose as to a pupil's wish to be part of a group,

“We have some lovely children but sometimes they may want to work alone. D, that lovely little girl who sits over there, gets everything right but she likes to sit quietly and do her work.”
(Teacher 8, interview)

Even though there are valid pedagogical reasons for small group work and for interaction within it, perhaps the most significant aspect is the pupils themselves and whether or not their needs are being met. If small group work is to benefit pupils and if they are comfortable enough to interact, then it must suit them and they must want to be a part of it and play a role in it. This point has been raised before with the suggestions that pupils ought to be taught how to participate in and contribute effectively as a group member.

The literature consulted on small group work for EAL pupils showed that it can provide the context in which pupils are led to practise and produce academic language, the language that they need to succeed in school (Gagné and Parks, 2013; Storch, 2007; Gibbons, 2006). Even when much is made of small group work, a cautionary note is advised as group work, without the appropriate planning and conditions will not necessarily lead to learning (Muijs and Reynolds, 2011; Kutnick et al., 2005).

It is of course, the teacher's responsibility to ensure that learning tasks are expertly planned to include interaction and that pupils are adequately trained

to participate in group work before meaningful interaction can occur. This was partly addressed by statement 10 of section C of the teacher's questionnaire "before organising group work, I train all pupils in social and communicative interactions" where 11 or 57.9% of teachers agreed that they do this. However, 6 teachers or 31.6% stated that they did not do so while 10.5% or 2 teachers neither agreed nor disagreed.

Section D of the same questionnaire specifically deals with challenges faced by NAEP and it is the perception of 47.4% or 9 teachers that pupils face challenges in "coping with new forms of classroom organization i.e. group work." To this, 5 teachers or 26.3% neither agree nor disagree and again 5 teachers or 26.3% disagree with the statement. These responses do not indicate such a positive perception of the need to prepare pupils for understanding, coping with and participating in small group activities. This could be explained by teachers not being aware of the need or how to prepare pupils for small group work.

5.5 Pupils' use of L1

Statement 4 of Section B of the questionnaire states "EAL pupils should not use their native language in school." 7 teachers or 36.8% neither agree nor disagree with this and 4 teachers or 21.1% disagree with the statement. The majority of teachers, 42.1% or 8 teachers think that pupils should be allowed to use their L1 in school. Only one teacher expressed disapproval of pupils using their L1 in lessons during the interview,

“The rule is you don’t speak your native language in the class. If that happens, then I wouldn’t pair a student with that particular student again.” (Teacher 3, interview)

Here, teacher 3 is demonstrating his intolerance of pupils using their L1 in his mainstream lesson. This action by teacher 3 is contrary to the guidelines of the school’s EAL policy which advocates the use of a pupil’s L1 and offers guidance on its use in mainstream lessons. Teacher 4, however, has a more positive and understanding perception of L1 usage intimating that he will allow the use of a pupil’s home language if the situation warrants it,

“(+) If I feel the task needs to be explained in the first language and if another student is able but sometimes I feel they need to be mixed and they need to be separated from those who speak the same language.” (Teacher 4, interview)

Teacher 4’s perceptions contrasts to Teacher 3’s and is in line with school expectations about L1 usage in mainstream lessons. It must be noted though and in the context of the school where this research takes place that the use of the L1 around school and in lessons is an issue that is often discussed informally amongst staff and that there is a guideline in the school’s EAL policy about the use of the L1 in lessons and as a tool to help NAEP participate in tasks related to lesson content.

De Angelis (2011) researched teachers’ beliefs about the role of prior language knowledge in learning and the results of a questionnaire designed to uncover teachers’ beliefs found that overall teachers showed little

awareness of the cognitive benefits of multilingualism and the usefulness of home language use and maintenance (De Angelis, 2011).

There are several issues worth exploring here; the perceived value of pupils' L1 and the literacy and cultural practices associated with it, their identity, the cognitive benefits of multilingualism and home language maintenance. NAEP need to feel welcomed and to know that they are valued whether or not they are proficient in the language of education. By allowing pupils space to use their L1, the school and its staff are showing their acceptance and embracement of the linguistic and cultural diversity that is a part of each pupil.

During the focus group, the use of the L1 surfaced in the discussion when pupil C said, "When me and N and her (pointing) working to each other, when it's hard to say it, we say it in Somali so we can understand each other." (Pupil C, focus group 1). From Pupil C's comment, we can see that there is definitely a place for the use of the L1 in mainstream classrooms and validating the school's guidance that the L1 can be used to explain academic work. Pupil C is explaining that if she and her same language peer are experiencing difficulties (when it's hard to say it), they have an additional resource or support in the form of Somali, their shared L1. L1 has a place in an EAL pupil's academic life in mainstream lessons for several reasons.

Research by Cummins et.al., (2005), consistently show that the inclusion, encouragement or continuation of the use of the L1 in an educational

context brings benefits to the pupils. The school's EAL policy was worded to reflect this,

“Recognition and use of the first language (mother tongue, native language, home language, L1) is beneficial for EAL pupils and can be a supportive learning tool. Peer support in the first language is acceptable and advisable if there is no other source available, however, there are some important points that we should consider.”

“Allowing the use of the first language:

- Shows our recognition and acceptance of other languages.
- Could provide an opportunity for the pupil to extend their learning and develop content knowledge.
- Helps pupils draw from their existing language skills and support their learning of English.
- Will not prevent or hinder English language development.”

(Appendix 1, EAL Policy)

36.8% or 7 teachers neither agree nor disagree with the use of the L1 in mainstream lessons while 21.1% or 4 teachers did not agree with its usage. These 11 or 57.9% of the teachers surveyed have demonstrated that they are not taking into account the school's position on the use of the L1 as stipulated by the EAL policy (Appendix 1). It has been noted that there are cases where teachers lack the confidence to deal with multilingualism in the mainstream classroom (Reeves, 2006; Ellis, 2004).

De Angelis (2011) and Pettit (2011) found that teachers who had lived in a foreign country and were exposed to other languages or were themselves

bi/multilingual had a more positive perception about incorporating different languages and were more understanding towards the challenges faced by EAL learners leading them to infer that a teacher's view on L1 use in the classroom or school space can be influenced by their own personal linguistic background. The questionnaire used in this present research did not address teachers' linguistic background or knowledge of other languages but it would be useful to consider this in future research.

5.6 Pupils' perceptions about small group work

On the question of pupils' perceptions of small group work, Teacher 2 expressed the concern that some pupils may view their placement within a particular group negatively which in turn could cause disharmony amongst pupils,

“Somebody perhaps like O, when I first met O, who hasn't got, I'm not saying, I don't know whether he (pauses) he wanted to stay with the more EAL students and now he would not, he would be insulted actually if I made him sit with a group of students who are, who he could see what I was up to, he would be insulted.” (Teacher 2, interview)

So it can be argued that, in practice group work has to fit not just the context but most importantly the pupils within it and how those pupils might perceive the use of group work and the reasons for their inclusion in small group work. Teacher 3 remarks,

“For the pupils, sometimes it may look as if you have (+) you are trying to create a separation in the class. Other students may interpret it differently because you did not allow him or her to sit with a friend but with this new arrived student, you have allowed him/her to sit with another friend so it creates sometimes a tension within a class but you got to have a strategy to address it.” (Teacher 3, interview)

It must be remembered too that pupils' perceptions need to be taken into consideration as how they view their learning experiences might differ from teachers' views (Barkhuizen, 1998). If pupils have a negative perception of organisational strategies implemented by teachers, this could then affect their participation and academic progress, bearing in mind as well that some NAEP are already in a vulnerable position by being a newcomer, often joining mid-term and mid-year.

When questioned about their views on small group work, the pupils from the focus group explained that they received peer-peer support in reading and spelling and their references to what they could not do and what they can now do demonstrates how much they value the support that they receive from their peers. Even though pupils mention that they are *in danger* of not being recognized if they are unable to contribute to a group task, the overriding message is that, for them, small group work in mainstream lessons is useful and helpful.

The matter of not being recognized as a valuable member of a group was mentioned only by pupils and not by adults. This suggests that the adults in the mainstream classrooms are either unaware that this occurs or could happen or if they have witnessed this do not attach any significance worth highlighting. But, as Teachers 2 and 3 above explained, there are negative perceptions attached to being an EAL pupil or a pupil in need of support and for this reason, some pupils might feel uncomfortable in a particular group.

Having pupils believe that they are placed in a particular group because of their limited English will not pave the way for successful interaction and engagement and could lead to a lack of effort on the part of all pupils involved. The reasons for a group's structure could be communicated to pupils to avoid the perception that small groups within a mainstream lesson are constructed based on academic ability.

English (2009, p.489) states that a teacher's assumptions and perceptions can shape the educational opportunities that they create for pupils and I believe that this in turn can influence or alter pupils' perceptions about the purpose of these "opportunities" in which they find themselves.

If when organising small group work, teachers consistently place only NAEP in a group, then pupils may feel that they are being "singled out" because of their limited English. This in turn could have a negative effect on a pupil's self-esteem.

"You feel better cause like when the teacher say you have to do something, you do it with other people and they explain. But sometimes, I try and if I don't try, they say oh, she doesn't know the work and don't write my name" (Pupil Y)

The above comment from pupil Y encapsulates pupils' position and argument that if their contribution to group work is not considered worthwhile, they will not be recognized as a member of the group. Pupil U shows her agreement by the following comment, "Yeah, I don't like that" (Pupil U).

This point calls into question the preparation of all pupils before they engage in small group work and how teachers prepare pupils before group work. Teachers will be aware that some NAEP are unable to contribute to group work because of their limited English amongst other reasons and so will have to find ways to sensitize other pupils to this and to distribute specific tasks in the group appropriately so that no one feels left out or is not included in the “credits” afterwards. From the pupils who participated in the focus group, there is a sense of an underlying fear of not receiving recognition as a group member.

5.7 TAs’ perceptions

When asked, “Do you ensure that EAL pupils are also able to interact with peers who can provide a good model of English?” TA 1 who supports pupils in KS 3 in Mathematics, Science, English and the Humanities sheds light on how some mainstream teachers group pupils,

“They don’t always, they don’t always because most of the time I find that the EAL learners are all sat together and they and some of them, they speak very little English.” (TA 1, interview)

From this comment, it seems to be a common practice for teachers to place EAL pupils together and some pupils’ comments in the focus group also suggest this when they make reference to pupils speaking their L1 during group work. TA 2 who supports mainly KS 4 pupils in Business, ICT and Mathematics lessons offers a different perspective which suggests that, for older pupils at KS 4, there is a different practice amongst some teachers,

“From my experience, thinking back, it was mixed groups that the students usually are put in so that all students have the chance to interact with each other, whether EAL or non-EAL and they can model each other”. (TA 2, interview)

The difference in grouping practices at KS 4 could be attributed to the fact that at this stage, pupils are generally preparing to sit external examinations and it could also depend on how lesson activities are planned to accommodate coursework and to maximize preparations for terminal examinations. In another research, it would be worth exploring the differences in teachers’ grouping strategies of EAL pupils based on KS and subject disciplines.

On examination of the data, a point of difference is that while some teachers express doubts and uncertainty regarding small group work, in the interviews, the TAs were consistently positive in their perceptions about its usefulness and the additional opportunities that this gives to pupils to practise language. TA 1, for example, stated that during small group work, EAL pupils are more focused on their work,

“Oh definitely, yes it does because when (-) when in small groups, they are able, there are times when there is question and answer and then they have more time then to speak whereas in a bigger group they don’t, they tend to be very shy and they don’t speak but when they are within a smaller group, then they tend to say more or they tend to be able to hear more, listen more and get the opportunity to speak.” (TA1, interview)

While some teachers are cautious about using small group because of behavioural concerns, they hardly saw it as a “safe haven” or a place of

security in which pupils would feel more confident and comfortable to express themselves. One teacher expressed certainty that interaction in small group work could provide a platform for pupils to practise language and to “build confidence and encouragement” (Teacher 6, interview).

This is similar to the views of the TAs who are more consistent in their praise of small group work as advantageous. The TAs appear to have a more intimate knowledge of the inner workings, benefits and disadvantages of small group work and they were quicker to pinpoint how it could help pupils to make progress in their language development.

However, the pre-eminent concern of teachers surveyed for this research were lack of progress in academic content due to limited language proficiency and the unsuitability of small group work because of negative behaviour within groups. Here, Teacher 6 shares concerns about negative behaviour, “It can however cause some concerns for bad behaviour as they may copy language and attitude which are not conducive to their learning” (Teacher 6, interview).

The TAs’ preoccupations centred on the social aspects that a small group could provide and the enhanced opportunities for language development. For the pupils, their perceived benefit of small group work is the comfort experienced in having peer-peer support in a smaller setting as opposed to a larger whole class environment where they feel open and less confident to use English. This is similar to the perceptions shared by the TAs but as

mentioned before, unlike most teachers who are more concerned about progress in their respective subjects.

During small group work, interaction which for the purposes of this research is defined as face-to-face communication has a role to play. Teachers and TAs were asked to give their perceptions on the role and value of interaction. Overall, they believe that where interaction occurs during small group work, pupils are supported in their language development and that having peer-peer support can, in fact, lead to a positive experience for pupils, giving them confidence and comfort to share with their peers in a smaller setting but within a mainstream whole class group.

At the time of this research, small group work within mainstream classes was being promoted as one of the strategies to include all learners and to provide individualised and differentiated learning tasks. Despite the perceived benefits of pupils being able to interact with their peers, it was highlighted that group dynamics and behaviour within groups can sometimes have a negative impact on the learning conditions for the pupils concerned. One teacher even suggests that, for this reason, group work might not be ideal for NAEP as they are better off in a calm and quiet atmosphere. Rather, paired work or one-to-one support from the teacher might prove a more meaningful form of assistance.

This causes me to again reflect on the government statements which promote the mainstream classroom as the best place for pupils to learn English and although, I believe this to a large extent, I think that there might

be instances where the atmosphere of the mainstream classroom is not always conducive to learning for someone in the early stages of learning the language of education.

5.8 Curriculum concerns

In SLA, there have been arguments for re-visiting pedagogies and a re-thinking of the curriculum for multilingual classrooms (Creese and Blackledge, 2010; Kramsch, 2009; Gearon et al. 2009). As the pupil population changes and diversifies, teachers find themselves in a position where they should reflect, question what and how they are teaching. We can all agree that NAEP must learn English but while they are in the process of doing so, what methods and approaches will one use to develop and to engage the knowledge that they bring to the classroom and at the same time ensure that they are receiving and internalising new knowledge, concepts and skills both in English and individual subject disciplines.

Pupils' existing cultural, social and linguistic knowledge as well as their previous literacy skills must play a part in the tasks and processes that educators use and try to use to engage them (Haneda and Wells, 2012; Cummins et. al., 2005). One can argue that the needs of the pupils are as diverse as the pupils themselves and that it would not be possible to cater to individual needs. But as others have suggested, the pupils themselves are the experts and educators need to re-consider the methods and approaches used to engage and to develop their knowledge (Mehmedbegović, 2012; Kramsch, 2009; Gearon et al, 2009; Harper et al 2010).

It has been shown too that there is a need to first, engage more with the pupils and their communities and then use the knowledge gathered from this encounter to re-structure the curriculum and the pedagogies we employ (Martin-Jones and Saxena, 2003). Or, in other words to first capture the “funds of knowledge” and use these to the advantage of the pupils and for us to be more “responsive to difference” (Gearon et al., 2009, p.3). The term “funds of knowledge” refers to pre-existing bodies of knowledge, skills, abilities, ideas and practices that pupils already know and use before they join our classrooms (Moll et.al, 1992).

Martin-Jones and Saxena, (2003) described a study that investigated how linking the home and school contexts could create learning opportunities for pupils and is just one example of an innovative approach that could be used to engage NAEP even if the “knowledge” that pupils already have might be different from those valued in their new country. Teacher 4 appeared to be thinking along these lines during the interview,

“We have to think outside the box, to include other things so we can’t really stick blindly to it. So we have to follow it of course, but I think we need to include other things for them to understand, to prepare them to understand the topic that you try to put across.”
(Teacher 4, interview)

EAL pupils are expected to acquire English language skills and subject knowledge across the curriculum simultaneously (DCSF, 2008; Leung and Rea-Dickens, 2007). In the school context of this research, mainstream teachers are required to follow the NC and topics are selected based on

those listed in the NC specification of study for individual subjects. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that pupils attain a certain level of progress in individual subject areas and this is determined by teacher assessments in each curriculum area.

Unfortunately, a focus solely on language skills will seem to put EAL learners at a disadvantage as every pupil has to be assessed and given a NC level at the end of each academic year and a focus on only language skills will mean that EAL learners will be seen as not having covered the necessary subject content to fulfil the NC requirements.

5.9 Assessment concerns

“Without putting too much pressure on them-getting some written work to assess as well as verbal interaction.” (Teacher 11, section E of the questionnaire)

The words above were expressed by teacher 11 in response to the question, “What are some of the challenges that you face with newly arrived EAL pupils in your classes.” Without wanting to, teachers have to “put pressure” on pupils because there is this sense of urgency, a need to show that they are making progress and moving up the levels. There is an expectation that every pupil should have a NC level in each subject discipline and this puts pressure on the teacher and on the pupil as well.

EAL pupils are judged based on their achievement and attainment in each subject discipline, equal to any other pupil and as part of their entitlement to education. In the curriculum, no distinction is or should be made as to

whether a pupil has limited proficiency in English and language development is expected to take place in mainstream lessons as part of the policy of mainstreaming in English schools (DfE, 2012; Wardman, 2012; Demie 2013; DCSF, 2008).

Here, assessment is linked to the curriculum because teachers are expected to have an assessment level in each subject area and in English and MFL, for example, there are separate levels for listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is not an easy process for NAEP as they are in a system where they are being assessed in English and are measured against the same standards as their monolingual or advanced bilingual peers (Demie, 2013; Leung and Rea-Dickens, 2007).

Therefore, in terms of the curriculum, teachers are faced with challenges such as what to teach, whether language or subject content and how to go about doing this while bearing in mind that each child will have to undergo some form of assessment. Assessments of subject content do not, to date, take into account the fact that NAEP are in the process of learning English and this is one key aspect where pupils are seen to be at a disadvantage (Leung, 2009; 2007).

In the UK, language barriers continue to pose one of the main challenges affecting the progress and performance of EAL learners (Demie, 2013). As the current policy towards NAEP advocates mainstreaming, EAL pupils are therefore in all areas of the curriculum where they have to learn subject content and English at the same time. In situations where a pupil's limited

proficiency in English inhibits their progress and attainment in the subject content, the resulting perceived lack of progress could disadvantage the pupil.

5.10 Professional Development

“Having received very little training on how to support EAL students, I do not feel confident that I am supporting them in a way which maximises their progress. I think that CPD in schools (although also in the university training programmes) is a really important way of allowing staff to feel confident with teaching EAL students.” (Teacher 3, Section E of the questionnaire)

From Teacher 3’s comment in section E of the questionnaire, we see that the need for professional development could affect the level of confidence which could, in turn, impact on how well or how poorly a teacher feels he/she can make adequate provisions for EAL pupils. In section E of the questionnaire, other teachers mentioned the lack of and the need for professional development for practicing teachers and trainees.

Davies (2012a) reports that in a 2011 study conducted by the then Teacher Development Agency (TDA), only 45% of NQTs considered their preparation to teach EAL pupils as being good or very good. There is a need for initial teacher training courses and continuing professional development programmes for practicing teachers to address linguistic and cultural diversity in mainstream classrooms (Davies, 2012a; Cajkler and Hall, 2009; Butcher et al., 2007).

By extension, teachers need to be knowledgeable and in their daily practice, displays awareness of how aspects of SLA and additional language learning,

bilingualism and biliteracy, teaching language and content, resource development and adapting lessons to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse pupils impact their teaching (Haneda and Wells, 2012; Lucas et al., 2008; Anderson, 2008; Valdés, 2004).

At present, EAL does not exist as a specialist or distinct area within teacher education and ITE programmes vary in their content and structure (Leung, 2009; Davies, 2012a). Nevertheless, mainstream teachers are expected to be skilled in adapting their pedagogy to meet the needs of the diverse pupil population. In the open questions of section E of the questionnaire, teacher 16 appears to show some frustration with the current system,

“I feel that the current UK education system does not equip teachers with the sufficient skills or knowledge of how to help EAL students to succeed. The classroom culture does not always welcome social integration of EAL and non-EAL children. I also think that EAL teaching is not given enough importance in the education system.”
(Teacher 16, section E of the questionnaire)

Government policy dictates that teachers have to meet the needs of all pupils but to promote the idea of cultural and linguistic inclusion there is a lack of sustained focus on how teachers can meet the needs of NAEP in mainstream lessons (DCSF, 2007b). Studies (eg Cajkler and Hall, 2009; Butcher and Sinka, 2007; Mistry and Sood, 2010) consistently highlight the need for lengthier training and development opportunities for teachers but to date, apart from courses mainly organized and managed by independent providers, teachers continue to face the challenge of wanting to know more

about the issues surrounding additional language learning in mainstream lessons.

The most recent change in funding arrangements means that schools now have direct control over funds that used to be allocated to ethnic and minority achievement issues (NALDIC, 2011). It is therefore left to be seen the priority that schools will place on implementing training and enrichment opportunities for staff in how to manage the diverse linguistic and cultural needs and nature of their pupils. Apart from the areas for professional development needs gathered from teacher comments, statements made by the TAs also highlighted other concerns.

One of these is the management of TAs and their deployment in mainstream classrooms. With respect to the matter at hand, the TAs interviewed mentioned that they were not involved in planning, either through giving their opinions on pupil placing within groups or in the planning of lessons. This raises questions about the professional relationship and collaboration between teachers and TAs and how teachers view TAs and their roles. In section E of the questionnaire, teacher 17 expressed the need for “better collaboration between all staff that works with EAL students” but did not specifically say with TAs.

In fact, during the interviews with the teachers, none of the teachers mentioned the role of the TAs but in the interviews with the TAs, all expressed the desire to collaborate with mainstream teachers. So, while the TAs saw the need to engage with teachers to plan and prepare for pupils, the

teachers were not seen to consider this a necessity. This suggests the need to review how TAs are deployed within the school and training for teachers to work with and manage TAs.

A close examination of the data did not reveal a notable pattern in answers when considering respondents' length of service, gender, and subjects. In some areas, it is noticeable that teachers who have been in the profession for more than 10 years neither agree nor disagree with certain statements which could be interpreted as an indication of their unwillingness to commit to a response. This suggests that a teacher's length of experience could have an influence on the beliefs and perceptions they hold or even their unwillingness to provide an insight into issues which affect their daily practice.

To extend this idea, those teachers who have been in the profession for more than 10 years and did not commit to a response could also be demonstrating their unawareness of the issues surrounding NAEP and the impact of classroom strategies and techniques.

5.11 Workload and planning

Another issue arising from the data concerns teacher workload and planning. Mainstream teachers mentioned the challenges of an increasing workload and finding the time to plan and to make preparations for NAEP. While the TAs also mention planning, they do so in a more positive light explaining that they would welcome opportunities to plan with mainstream teachers.

Both sets of staff are highlighting the necessity of and at the same time, the lack of professional encounters in which to collaborate and organise teaching and learning activities for NAEP. However, it is only the TAs who explicitly voiced the desire to engage in and to have organized planning time with teachers. In section E of the questionnaire, teacher 9, refers to the workload and the need for more TAs but does not convey a desire for joint planning opportunities with support staff,

“More teaching assistants are needed to work with subject teachers and pupils. Too often, subject teachers have to "juggle" to cater to all the different levels and abilities in their lessons.” (Teacher 9, section E of questionnaire)

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

“I think it’s good doing group work. People you are working with might tell you things about the work you don’t know about and learn from them.” (Year 8 pupil from Hungary)

This chapter summarizes the research findings, presents its limitations and proposes recommendations for future research. The conclusion will be presented by giving a brief overview of the responses to each research question.

6.1 Summary of the research

The purpose of the research was to explore the perceptions of teachers, TAs and pupils about small group work for NAEP in mainstream lessons in one school. To do this, I formulated research questions and then investigated suitable instruments to collect data. Two similar questionnaires were designed and sent to the teachers and TAs at the school where this research was based. In all, 19 teachers and 3 TAs completed the online questionnaire. Data was also gathered from semi-structured interviews with teachers and TAs and focus group discussions held with pupils.

This is a case study conducted in one school and using the experiences of staff and learners in that school and at a particular period. At the time of the research, there was a whole school initiative focusing on small group work as a strategy to include and engage all pupils in mainstream lessons.

Additionally, during this period of time the school was experiencing a rapid increase in the number of NAEP with limited English and whose inclusion in mainstream lessons was a cause for concern. The guiding questions for the interview and focus group discussion were based on the literature reviewed for this research which investigates small group work as a strategy to foster language development and learning in mainstream lessons for pupils new to English.

6.2 Summary of the findings

The sources of data collection; questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions yielded responses that not only addressed the research questions but illuminated avenues that were not previously considered. The findings demonstrate that teachers and TAs have a positive perception of NAEP and make efforts to uphold the teachers' standards and government policy to include and to involve them in mainstream lessons. At the same time, concerns surrounding specific issues that inclusion in the mainstream holds for pupils are voiced. Pupils show awareness of the support gained from small group work but at the same time express challenges encountered.

6.2.1 Teachers

The data from the questionnaire revealed that teachers have a positive perception about the inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons. Overall, teachers demonstrated awareness of the need for differentiated and specific planning to ensure that NAEP are supported in not just language but in the academic and social spheres. In the questionnaire, 63.2 % or 12 of the 19

teachers surveyed expressed concerns over their ability to adequately plan and provide for the varying needs of NAEP in their mainstream lessons citing workload as a hindrance to how well they believe they can carry out their practice.

In the open section of the questionnaire, Teacher 1, for example, expressed concern over the issue of teaching subject content or English language. This demonstrates that there also exists an awareness of the need to pay attention to linguistic form in mainstream lessons but a lack of knowledge in how to combine or integrate academic content and language. The majority of teachers surveyed for this research regard small group work an appropriate place in which a pupil new to English can be supported in mainstream lessons.

Within the small group setting, interaction with same-age peers, the act of engaging in talk, collaborating on learning tasks and peer-peer correction can, as the evidence from this research suggests provide the skills that pupils need to progress in their language development. One teacher noted that through the practice of interacting with peers in a group setting, the way is also being paved for pupils to employ the skills acquired outside of the school environment.

However, some teachers were quick to point out that the dynamics between group members might not be conducive to learning and that for some NAEP, paired work as opposed to group work could be considered more appropriate. Paired instead of group work was also recommended by Storch

and Lasito (2013) in their study which sought to compare small group and pair interactions on oral tasks.

Storch and Lasito (2013) found that pairs generated more language than small groups which is a point worth considering for future studies in this area and it would be useful to investigate the amount and quality of language produced during both small group and paired work in different subjects. In such a research, the pupils could be asked to supply feedback on their perception of the usefulness of both group and paired encounters.

6.2.2 Teaching assistants

The relevant KS of pupils and the nature of the learning tasks were perceived by one TA as important elements to consider when planning for group work. From the perception of the TAs, small group work is beneficial to NAEP as there are increased opportunities for language practice and social exchanges. The TAs commented on the lack of joint planning time with teachers as they surmise that these could be ideal opportunities for both groups to plan interactive group tasks.

Time to plan with mainstream teachers was identified as one of the major findings from a study about the role of TAs in schools (Blatchford, P. et al, 2011). Monaghan (2012) carried out interviews with one mainstream teacher and one TA working with EAL pupils while Driver and Vazquez (2012) interviewed TAs working with EAL pupils. The interviewees from Monaghan (2012) and Driver and Vazquez (2012) also commented on the unavailability of joint planning time.

TA 2 even though he has a positive opinion of small group work perceptively warns against its overuse and encourages mixing or changing group members so that pupils are not always with their same language peers as this could inhibit their development of English. While not disapproving of the use of pupils' L1, TA 2 is demonstrating that greater thought must be put into ensuring that group work serves and fulfils a purpose and that proper planning is essential to achieve the desired lesson outcomes.

6.2.3 Pupils

The perception of pupils is that participating in learning tasks in a smaller group does help them to engage and process both content and language. At the same time, they are aware of the possible drawbacks of their involvement in group work. Two of the pupils who participated in the focus group discussion cited a lack of recognition for their contribution if their peers felt that their efforts towards the completion of a group task were minimal because of their limited English.

Pupils were also vocal about the use of their L1 in instances where it helped them to understand the content of a lesson and acknowledged that being with same language peers in a group has its advantages. Several pupils made reference to reading because at the time, there was a focus on shared reading across the curriculum with pupils assigned to different reading groups to explore a book and to collaborate on related tasks.

The following is a summary of the findings for each research question.

6.3 Research question 1

What are teachers' perceptions about the inclusion of newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons?

The data gathered from the questionnaire showed that 57.9% or 11 of the 19 teachers surveyed have positive perceptions about the inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons. Through open-ended item responses, it was further revealed that there are concerns regarding the language proficiency level of NAEP and how this could negatively impact the progress of pupils not needing language support. This view is corroborated by Statement 2, "EAL pupils should not be included in mainstream lessons until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency" to which 63.2% or 12 teachers agree.

However, 21.1% or 4 teachers disagree with this statement and responses in the open section of the questionnaire shed light on the reasons. In the open section, teachers 1 and 18 questioned whether they should focus on language or on subject content. Of the 19 teachers, 16 or 84.2% agree to Statement 5, "I welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils in my classes." Two of the teachers interviewed recounted positive experiences with EAL pupils in her lessons.

To bolster the view that teachers have positive perceptions regarding the inclusion of EAL pupils in their lessons is the response to Statement 6 "When given appropriate support, I believe EAL pupils can master the curriculum", to which 68.4% or 13 teachers strongly agree and 6 teachers or

31.6% agree. Even though teachers welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils, 63.2% or 12 teachers strongly agree that there is an increase in their workload while 7 teachers or 36.8% agree.

6.4 Research question 2

What are teachers' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?

Overall, teachers' perceptions is that small group interaction supports the language development of NAEP. The Likert item questionnaire comprises statements about pupil-pupil interaction, language practice and production, increase in subject vocabulary and access to the curriculum. On these statements, the majority of teachers agreed that small group interaction was useful and provided support in these areas.

To Statement 12 of section C, "Small group work provides interactional opportunities for pupils with EAL", 89.5% or 17 of the 19 teachers surveyed agreed. 18 teachers or 94.7% agreed to Statement 15, "Interaction during small group work supports the English language development of pupils with EAL." Equally, for Statement 18, "I try to create interactional opportunities for the EAL pupils in my lesson", 94.7% or 18 teachers agreed. To Statement 17, "Through pupil-pupil interaction pupils with EAL are better able to access the curriculum", 89.5% or 17 teachers are in agreement.

However, the results of Statement 19, "Pupils with EAL will improve their English whether or not they have opportunities to interact in lessons, show that only 36.9% or 7 teachers agreed with the same percentage not

committing to a response. 26.3% or 5 teachers disagreed to statement 19. These responses indicate that the perception of teachers is that small group interaction is beneficial and they create opportunities for it. However, there are some whose perception is that even without this, EAL pupils are still able to improve their English.

6.5 Research question 3

What are teaching assistants' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?

The perception of the TAs interviewed and surveyed is that small group interaction is beneficial to pupils. From the point of view of the TAs, during small group interaction, there is pupil-pupil support, pupils are more focused and engaged, have more time to discuss classwork, feel a sense of belonging and appear confident and willing to make use of increased opportunities to speak.

One of the TAs highlighted the fact that small group interaction might not necessarily be ideal for KS 4 learners and that the decision to make use of small groups to facilitate interaction and learning should be dependent on the purpose and intended outcome of the learning task and activity. The sense of belonging, increased confidence and engagement mentioned by the TAs is perhaps more obvious in their role.

6.6 Research question 4

What are EAL pupils' perceptions about small group interaction?

Overall, the perception of pupils is that they benefit from small group interaction. Pupils admitted that they were aware that they needed language support, that their peers could provide assistance and were grateful that they could, in some cases use their L1 to clarify misunderstandings or for explanations.

Pupils also felt that small group work provides a “cushion”, a comforting environment in which they can use their L1 and practise English through peer-peer support before speaking in front of a whole class. Pupils also mentioned that being part of a group was sometimes uncomfortable because of the fear that their contribution to a task might be insufficient.

To summarize, teachers, TAs and pupils affirmed the benefits of small group interaction, have positive perceptions of it but at the same time drew attention to issues which could improve the outcomes for pupils.

6.7 Recommendations and Implications

This research was a learning and an investigative process and the findings have led to recommendations and implications which will involve school managers and governors as they have the authority to implement structures to support and to develop the professional skills and pedagogical approaches of staff. School managers and governors must be responsive to the needs of staff who in turn must be responsive to the needs of pupils.

School managers may also be influential in the direction and use of funding towards the development of EAL. A recommendation that came out of this research is the need to equip teachers with the knowledge base necessary to

understand language awareness, language acquisition and issues surrounding additional language learning. For this to be done, serious thought should be given towards compulsory professional development programmes.

Teachers need to be aware of a wider repertoire of classroom organizational strategies so that when they are required to implement a particular strategy such as the use of group work as outlined in this research, they are aware of the consequences, the benefits and the need to train or prepare pupils for these activities and importantly, how to plan so that language and content are integrated and there is noticeable linguistic progress.

This research uncovered perceptions of teachers about their own lack of professional development which most thought were deficient in occasions to enhance their practice and to broaden their outlook and attitude to the inclusion of NAEP. In the open section of the questionnaire, for example, 4 teachers expressed the need for training. Teacher 3 remarked,

“Having received very little training on how to support EAL students, I do not feel confident that I am supporting them in a way which maximises their progress. I think that CPD in schools (although also in the university training programmes) is a really important way of allowing staff to feel confident with teaching EAL students.” Teacher 3, Section E of the questionnaire)

Karabenick and Noda’s 2004 research about the professional development implications of teachers’ beliefs and attitudes towards ELLs unearthed teachers’ desires for increased attention to training and made propositions for professional development in this area (Karebenick and Noda, 2004).

Along with professional development opportunities, another recommendation is for dedicated planning time for teachers and TAs to discuss and organise the management of teaching and learning activities. The perceptions that teachers and TAs have of the classroom do not necessarily match and having the opportunity to discuss the deployment of support staff could help both parties to monitor the effectiveness of how each facilitates learning.

A further recommendation is to give direct attention to the strategies and methods used to include new arrivals and to support their development of English. An example would be to focus on instances of peer-peer interactions in mainstream lessons and identify the turns taken by pupils to clarify misconceptions or misunderstandings. Or, through peer-peer interaction, instances where pupils re-phrase or re-cast language and structures could be identified.

These two examples would provide an exposition of the type of language support that peers give to each other and help teachers to determine the purpose of the verbal interaction, whether it is language or content knowledge. Storch and Lasito (2013) have conducted this type of research which helped to explain the form of peer-peer support.

There has been a call for more research with school-aged NAEP, how they overcome barriers and integrate and what, in their views works for them. Kaneva (2012), Wallace (2014) and Safford and Costley (2008) have undertaken research in this area. To build on the findings, this study should

be replicated in another setting with a similar group of pupils. This was a case study research conducted in one school with a high level of pupil mobility, a rapidly increasing number of NAEP with limited English and during a time of staff upheaval because of redundancies.

Depending on the research focus, context, orientation and the data collection instruments, one will need to consider the language proficiency of NAEP from whom verbal contributions would be solicited. Evidently, there are ways to overcome this such as carrying out observations which was not done for this study but could be used in future research of this kind.

With pupils, staff should seek their perceptions of organisational, teaching and learning strategies and act on suggestions. In this way, staff can deal with the apprehension of new arrivals. Government policies and guidelines on EAL influence the school's own EAL policy and there should be a close monitoring of initiatives that are implemented on a whole school level to ensure that they are being conducted according to guidelines and policies and that practice is used to update and inform policy and changes.

For the school, implications would involve a focus on staff development that incorporates the theory and practical aspects of teaching and learning strategies for pupils new to English and monitoring of their implementation. There should also be dedicated planning time, collaboration and sharing of ideas amongst the categories of staff directly involved in teaching and learning with time given for reflection and an outlet to discuss and evaluate approaches and strategies.

6.8 Limitations and areas for future research

While reflecting on the emerging data and findings some limitations became evident. The sample of pupils for the group discussion could have included KS 4 NAEP and KS 4 advanced learners who could have provided another perspective to the situation. Pupils in KS 4 would have been able to provide a picture of their experiences which would then make it possible to compare with the views of teachers or TAs. One TA, for example, argued that group work is perhaps less suitable for KS 4 learners who are preparing to sit external examinations. Future research could therefore compare the perceptions of KS 3 and KS 4 pupils about the value of small group work.

At the time of the research, 53% of the pupil population of the school was identified as EAL learners. The remaining 47% are linguistically identified as monolingual English speakers. In the first focus group discussion, only pupils with EAL were included whereas in the second focus group, there was one monolingual English speaker.

In hindsight, there ought to have been monolingual English speakers in both focus group discussions as they are part of the context and are as much affected by the classroom management, organisational practices and teaching and learning strategies of which small group work is a part. Their voices and perceptions are equally valuable considering that the English skills of monolingual English speakers are often used as points of references and models for pupils new to English.

Another limitation concerns the data collection methods. The volunteers who participated in the semi-structured interviews expressed largely positive perceptions about inclusion and NAEP. There could be some bias in the data collected during the interviews by staff who wanted to display a positive attitude towards the research focus. Additionally, the fact that I am a colleague could influence those surveyed to paint a positive outlook or modify their actual beliefs and practices.

6.9 Contribution to the research literature

Although this study was confined to one school, the findings and the study itself can contribute to the research literature. As more attention is being paid to additional language learning with school-aged EAL pupils in school settings, studies like this one, even with its limitations can offer useful information, adding to the work of Coelho (2012) and Gravelle (2005) who present arguments for the use of small group work. Coelho (2012, p. 251) explains and shows how small group work helped NAEP by giving them a “safe” space to practise language. Gravelle (2005) situates small group work within a sociocultural context and outlines its suitability as a strategy for differentiation and inclusion.

The findings of this study can add to the growing body of research done with pupils and about teaching and learning arrangements and conditions for NAEP in the following ways. Firstly, from the focus group discussions done for this study, it was shown that NAEP benefitted from being with their same-age peers in a smaller setting and even when drawbacks were

identified, their overall perceptions with the experience of small group work were positive. This is similar to the pupils in Storch and Lasito's study who stated that the intimacy of a smaller group pushed them to use English and rehearse academic language (Storch and Lasito, 2013).

Secondly, the perceptions of school practitioners and pupils inform our understanding of how to support NAEP in school. The perceptions of teachers, TAs and pupils as expressed in the interviews and the focus group discussions contribute to the understanding of how NAEP find their place in mainstream lessons and how they are welcomed by staff and peers. In the research literature, work by Safford and Costley (2008), Kaneva (2012) and Wallace (2011; 2014) have enlightened our views on the school experiences of pupils with EAL.

Kaneva (2012) and Wallace (2011; 2014) researched the experiences of groups of secondary-aged pupils as they settled in schools and gave us an insight into how NAEP navigate new systems and ways of learning and socialising. Safford and Costley (2008) interviewed pupils who recounted their stories and feelings about learning English in mainstream education, some of whom shared similar experiences of small group work. My study therefore adds to these by building on what is already known and investigating an aspect of new pupils' school mainstream experiences.

By presenting the pupils' voices, their perceptions about what group work does for them, both positively and negatively add to the growing body of research literature on school experiences for pupils new to English. These

perceptions are from the participants themselves and as such offer a direct view into their experiences.

Thirdly, there are wider implications from my research which relate to the literature. Research by Davies (2012a) and Cajkler and Hall (2010) has shown the need for EAL issues to be addressed in ITE and CPD programmes. This point was also highlighted in this research as teachers expressed the desire to increase their knowledge and awareness of matters surrounding NAEP in mainstream classrooms. Not only did the adult participants share their perceptions on the questions posed, they also illuminated issues which demonstrate their thinking and position on matters such as inclusion and mainstreaming for NAEP, making provisions, workload, lesson preparation and delivery and collaborating with TAs.

Finally, TAs voiced their desire to work collaboratively with teachers and provided an insight into mainstream lessons. By exposing the views of TAs, this finding will contribute to the existing research literature on the role of TAs with regards to NAEP in mainstream lessons. Davies (2012b) and Monaghan (2012) for example, interviewed TAs who gave their insights into the support they provide in mainstream lessons and their wish to work closer with teachers.

6.10 Concluding thoughts

The end of this research seems like the beginning because through conducting this research, seeking answers to numerous questions and issues surrounding the educational opportunities and challenges faced by NAEP opened up numerous avenues and threads that at times made it difficult to narrow the study focus but from which have now emerged new pathways for future studies in this area.

Ideas surrounding the teaching and learning practices for pupils with EAL have, over the years been influenced by changes in the field of SLA and as the pupil population in the UK becomes increasingly diverse, more and more thoughts are given to classroom practices seeking to include and to engage all learners and to directly focus on developing language in the mainstream classroom (Arnot et al., 2014; Conteh, 2014).

The context in which NAEP, staff and other learners find themselves is open to changes and challenges as seen at the school where this research was undertaken and its efforts to identify pedagogic practices that aim to enhance the learning experiences of all pupils gearing them towards progress. These changes and challenges are inevitable given the shifting linguistic and cultural landscape of the school.

At this school, not only do teachers and other staff working with pupils inside the classroom have to be adept at identifying the linguistic barriers and managing the cultural diversity but they also have to attend and adhere to initiatives and guidelines put forward by the government.

A recent initiative at the school where this research was undertaken stemmed from government focus on literacy, reading and differentiated instruction. These initiatives were an attempt to improve the levels of achievement of disadvantaged groups of pupils by implementing whole school literacy strategies, scheduled reading sessions and small group teaching within mainstream lessons. This is the situation surrounding the efforts to conduct this research at the time when it was done. It is also an attempt to combine my daily practice with research elements and this in itself posed a challenge.

During the course of the research and as is expected from engaging with research and seeking ways to address issues in one's professional practice, I found that I significantly increased my knowledge about educational research itself and classroom practices. I strongly believe in self-improvement and continuing professional development that produces evidence to uphold, oppose or develop strategies.

A recent report by BERA calls for teachers to engage with research, to identify practices that work and those that might not be effective both in their "phase and specialism" (BERA, 2014 p.37). I can add that opportunities to conduct research are not plentiful and by opportunities, I refer to financial, time constraints and the occasion to collaborate with professional expertise in conducting research. Notwithstanding, I have fulfilled this desire to research my professional practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: EAL Policy

Statement of Purpose

At the XXXXXX School, we are committed to ensuring that every pupil succeeds and reaches their full potential.

English as an additional language (EAL)

EAL is used in reference to pupils whose first language is not English. These pupils may have recently arrived in the country or are being brought up in homes and communities where languages other than English are used. In the educational environment, they now have to learn English in addition to languages they already know and use, and they have to use English to access subject content in different curriculum areas (DfE, 2014).

Our situation

Our EAL pupils come from a wide range of ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Some of our EAL pupils arrive in school having had little or no formal education while some have prior experience of formal education and with literacy skills in one or more languages. Additionally, some of these pupils have no or very little understanding of English.

Our beliefs

At the XXXXXX School, we believe that

- Our pupils of EAL are entitled to the same educational opportunities as any other pupil.

- All pupils of EAL are different: they may have exposure to a variety of languages, home backgrounds, previous educational experience and life.
- Their needs are linguistic.
- The bi/multilingualism of our pupils enriches our school community and where appropriate, it should be used to promote achievement.
- Language development in pupils is the responsibility of all staff.

Our Aims

At the XXXXX School, we will

- Provide our EAL pupils with a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment where they are accepted, valued and encouraged to participate.
- Provide appropriate support to pupils with EAL needs whether they are newly arrived or advanced pupils.
- Provide an inclusive curriculum and ensure that pupils are making progress and are able to access the school curriculum.
- Provide appropriate support to staff to enhance their own provision for EAL pupils.
- Assess and monitor pupils in order to set appropriate but challenging targets.
- Encourage parents/carers and the wider community to play a full and positive role in the life and development of the school.
- Liaise with other agencies to further improve the teaching and learning experiences of all our pupils.

Teaching and Learning (Strategies for mainstream teachers)

- Provide contextual support such as pictures, objects, diagrams, actions, videos, gestures, etc.

- Provide key visuals to teach and reinforce concepts and support language acquisition: flow charts, tables, mind maps.
- Identify and teach key words and phrases and provide opportunities for practice.
- Draw on the pupil's previous knowledge, skills and experiences.
- Ensure topics, materials and resources are culturally familiar and accessible.
- Provide plenty of small group collaborative activities where listening and talking are central to learning.
- Group the pupil with his/her intellectual and social peers and strong English language peer models.
- Ensure clear layout of worksheets/support materials.
- Regularly check the pupil has understood instructions.
- Encourage pupils to use bilingual dictionaries where appropriate.
- Provide scaffolding for reading and writing tasks: writing frames and information grids.

Some specific strategies to develop communication in English

- Self-talk: label and describe what you are doing, demonstrating how to communicate about an activity.
- Parallel talk: you describe the pupil's activity as you interact with him/her.
- Repeating: listen carefully to the pupil, and then repeat all or part of what he/she said. This clarifies and serves as an acknowledgement of the pupil's speech, and encourages the pupil to continue talking because it shows interest in what they have to say.
- Restating: when the pupil makes a language error, repeat what they have said in a corrected form without drawing attention to the error.
- Expanding/extending: a natural conversational technique in which the adult adds new ideas to the discussion, encouraging pupils to expand their thinking or to develop new vocabulary.
- Modelling: pupils will need to learn new language structures in meaningful contexts many times before they can use them. One way to accomplish this is to model the language by using it in just the way we want them to use it.

- Open-ended questions: asking questions which have more than one ‘right’ answer stimulates more language use, affirms ideas and encourages creative thinking.

Guidance on using peer support in language other than English

Recognition and use of the first language (mother tongue, native language, home language, L1) is beneficial for EAL pupils and can be a supportive learning tool. Peer support in the first language is acceptable and advisable if there is no other source available, however, there are some important points that we should consider.

In line with the school rules, at no time should a pupil be talking while the teacher, another adult or pupil is addressing the class.

Here are some points to consider and questions to ask yourself if you have to ask a pupil to translate / interpret for another pupil or, in other words, if you need to use peer support in a language other than English.

- This should be done when there is an opportunity for pupil-pupil interaction or during group work / collaborative learning tasks.
- You may need to give the pupil translating/interpreting additional time to understand the subject content before being asked to explain to another pupil.
- You should give clear and precise instructions to the pupil translating / interpreting and do not be afraid to set a time limit.
- Check that the pupil translating/interpreting can access the content or understand the academic language of the subject before being asked to explain to another person.
- Check that the pupils are actually doing the work. Are they making progress?

- Check that the pupil providing the support is also making expected progress and working towards his/her target. Is the peer support holding back the pupil?
- Translating / interpreting is a skill, it is time-consuming and can place mental pressure on pupils.
- At what point can a monolingual English speaker support the pupil?
- Can the pupil receiving the support report back in English?
- Some pupils will be shy and may not want to use their first language. If this happens, do not force them.

Use your professional judgment, if you do not believe that the pupils are purposefully engaged and are actively constructing knowledge, then do not allow them to use a language other than English during teaching and learning.

Allowing the use of the first language

- Shows our recognition and acceptance of other languages.
- Could provide an opportunity for the pupil to extend their learning and develop content knowledge.
- Helps pupils draw from their existing language skills and support their learning of English.
- Will not prevent or hinder English language development.

The EAL Department is based in XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

The EAL or language development department teaches the English language skills that pupils need to become proficient in English and to achieve the same challenging content standards as their monolingual English-speaking peers. We provide:

- Bilingual support (when necessary) in withdrawal or mainstream lessons
- One-to-one support (to work on specific difficulties for a short period of time)
- In class support across the curriculum
- Withdrawal support for some pupils new to English (usually a 6 weeks induction programme)
- Partnership teaching with mainstream teachers
- Lunch time and after school support for individual pupils or groups of pupils
- Coaching for staff
- Help with lesson planning and lesson activities

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Appendix 2: Teacher Questionnaire

Mainstream teachers’ perceptions of small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils.

Section A

(1) Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

(2) How many years have you completed as a teacher?

(3) Which subject/s do you teach?

Section B

This section is about your perceptions of EAL pupils in your mainstream lessons.	strongly agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons benefits all pupils.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. EAL pupils should not be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

included in mainstream lessons until they attain a minimum level of proficiency in English.

3. It is difficult for mainstream teachers to find enough time to deal with the needs of EAL pupils.

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4. EAL pupils should not use their native language in school.

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5. I welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils in my classes.

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6. When given appropriate support I believe EAL pupils can master the curriculum.

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7. The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons increases my workload.

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8. I am good at helping EAL pupils to understand the

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☐

material in my lessons.

Section C

<p>This section is about the role and value of small group interaction during mainstream lessons.</p>	strongly agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
<p>1. Small group work has a positive effect on the achievement of pupils with EAL.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. During small group work pupils with EAL seem more confident and less anxious.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. During small group work monolingual and bilingual EAL pupils support and learn from each other.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. During small group work there are more opportunities for language practice.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Pupils with EAL find participating in small group work a challenge.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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6. It is unfair to modify classwork and seating plans for EAL pupils.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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7. I use collaborative small group work as a strategy to engage EAL pupils.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

8. Because of the demands of the curriculum I do not have time to organize and plan group work.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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9. Even when I plan group work I cannot ensure that EAL pupils engage in productive talk.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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10. Before organizing group work I train all pupils in social and communicative

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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interactions.

11. I require training in order to plan for effective group work so that all pupils will benefit academically.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

12. Small group work provides interactional opportunities for pupils with EAL.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

13. Verbal interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to produce new language.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

14. During small group work pupils with EAL are under pressure to extend their communicative skills.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

15. Interaction during small group work supports the English language development of pupils with

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

EAL.					
16. Interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to increase their subject vocabulary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Through pupil-pupil interaction pupils with EAL are better able to access the curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I try to create interactional opportunities for EAL pupils to listen to and to use English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Pupils with EAL will improve their English whether or not they have opportunities to interact in lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section D

Please read the following and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements.

During small group work pupils with EAL face challenges in:	1 strongly agree	2	3	4	5 strongly disagree
(a) understanding subject-specific language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) understanding their other EAL peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) initiating conversation about the subject matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) engaging in and sustaining extended talk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) coping with new forms of classroom organization i.e. group work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Small group work offers pupils with EAL opportunities to:	1 strongly agree	2	3	4	5 strongly disagree
(a) engage in collaborative talk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) pay attention to and practise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

subject-specific language.

(c) listen to good models of spoken English.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

(d) be actively engaged in learning tasks.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

(e) be supported by their peers.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

(f) develop discourse competence without feeling under pressure.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Section E

What are some of the challenges that you face with newly arrived EAL pupils in your classes?

Please describe any strategies that you use to help newly arrived EAL pupils in your classes.

Please write any additional comments you have about this questionnaire.

Privacy statement

This form is anonymous. No data which personally identifies you is collected on the form, and the data you provide is an important contribution to the dialogue about EAL pupils in our school.

Spam protection question

The sun is yellow. What colour is the sun?

[Send form](#)

Bottom of Form

Appendix 3: Teaching Assistant Questionnaire

Teaching assistants' perceptions of small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils.

Section A

(1) Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

(2) How many years have you completed as a teaching assistant?

Section B

This section is about your perceptions of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons.	strongly agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
1. The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons benefits all pupils.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. EAL pupils should not be included in mainstream lessons until they attain a minimum level of proficiency in English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. It is difficult for teaching assistants to find enough time to deal with the needs of EAL pupils.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. EAL pupils should not use their native language in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I welcome the inclusion of EAL pupils in my small group work within mainstream lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. When given	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

appropriate support I believe EAL pupils can master the curriculum.

7. The inclusion of EAL pupils in mainstream lessons increases my workload.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. I am good at helping EAL pupils to understand the subject material in lessons.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Section C

This section is about the role and value of small group interaction during mainstream lessons.

strongly agree agree ther agree nor agree disagree strongly disagree

1. Small group work has a positive effect on the achievement of pupils with EAL.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2. During small group work pupils with EAL seem more confident and less anxious.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3. During small group work monolingual and bilingual EALpupils support and learn from each other.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

4. During small group work there are more opportunities for language practice.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5. Pupils with EAL find participating in small group work a challenge.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

6. It is unfair to modify classwork and seating plans for EAL pupils.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. I use collaborative small group work as a strategy to engage EALpupils.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. During group work I cannot ensure that EAL pupils engage in productive talk.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. Before organizing group work I train all pupils in social and communicative interactions.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. I require training in order

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

to plan for effective group work so that all pupils will benefit academically.

11. Small group work provides interactional opportunities for pupils with EAL.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Verbal interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to produce new language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. During small group work pupils with EAL are under pressure to extend their communicative skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Interaction during small group work supports the English language development of pupils with EAL.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Interaction during small group work provides opportunities for pupils to increase their subject vocabulary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Through pupil-pupil interaction pupils with EAL are better able to access the curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I try to create interactional opportunities for EAL pupils to listen to and to use English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Pupils with EAL will improve their English whether or not they have opportunities to interact in lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section D

Please read the following and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

During small group work pupils with EAL face challenges in:	1 strongly agree	2	3	4	5 strongly disagree
(a) understanding subject-specific language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) understanding their other EAL peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(c) initiating conversation about the subject matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) engaging in and sustaining extended talk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) coping with new forms of classroom organization i.e. group work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small group work offers pupils with EAL opportunities to:	1 strongly agree	2	3	4	5 strongly disagree
(a) engage in collaborative talk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) pay attention to and practise subject-specific language.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) listen to good models of spoken English.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) be actively engaged in learning tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) be supported by their peers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) develop discourse competence without feeling under pressure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section E

What are some of the challenges that you face when supporting newly arrived EAL pupils during mainstream lessons?

Please describe any strategies that you use to help newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons.

Please write any additional comments you have about this questionnaire.

Privacy statement

This form is anonymous. No data which personally identifies you is collected on the form, and the data you provide is an important contribution to the dialogue about EAL pupils in our school.

Spam protection question

What is two minus one?

Send form

Appendix 4: Letter to Parents / Guardians

Keisha Reid
Birmingham

January 20, 2013

Dear Parent / Guardian

My name is Keisha Reid and I am a student in Educational Studies at the University of Warwick. I am writing to ask permission for your child to participate in the research project that I will be carrying out at school. The title of my research is

“A case study of the experiences of small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils in a secondary school: Perceptions of teachers, teaching assistants and pupils”.

What will my research mean for your child?

To gather information for this research, I will interview a group of students about their perceptions of small group interaction during their mainstream lessons. These will be done out of lesson time and will be at a time convenient to your child. At no time will your child be unsupervised.

Ethical Issues

I'll be doing the following things to protect the confidentiality and privacy of your son/daughter and of the school:

- Not using real names in any written account of this research.

- All information relevant to your son/daughter will be made available to them or to you upon request.
- All data collected during the research will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office.
- No part of the data collected will be shown to third parties such as other teachers, teaching assistants, other personnel from our or any other school or Inspectors from the Department of Education or the Local Authority. The data will be available to my supervisor, Dr. Jane Medwell, at the University of Warwick.

I hope you will give permission for your child to participate in this research project. To do this, you need to complete the CONSENT FORM attached to this letter and ask your child to return it to me within the next two weeks. Please note that if you change your mind about this, your child can withdraw from the project at any time without being disadvantaged in any way. If you would like to discuss any aspect of this research please contact me on XXXXXXXXXX. You can also contact me by e-mail at the following address: XXXXXXXX

Thanking you in anticipation, for your support.

Yours sincerely

Keisha Reid

Consent Form

Date:

Child's name:

Parent / Guardian's name:

I give permission for my child to take part in this research. I understand that no personal information will be revealed and that my child's name will not be used.

Signature

Appendix 5: Letter to the Head Teacher

Keisha Reid
Birmingham

Name
Headteacher
XXXXXXX School
Birmingham

January 09, 2013

Dear XXXXXXX

My name is Keisha Reid and I am currently a part – time student in Educational Studies at the University of Warwick. I am writing to you to request permission to undertake research at the XXXXXX School related to my topic. I am carrying out research in English as an Additional Language (EAL) and I am looking at small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils.

The research questions are

1. What are teachers' perceptions about the inclusion of newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons?
2. What are teachers' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?
3. What are teaching assistants' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?

4. What are EAL pupils' perceptions about small group interaction?

The research activities that will be undertaken at the school are:

1. Meeting with a group of pupils and explaining what I will be doing and how I will do this.
2. Asking pupils about their experience and perception of small group interaction in mainstream lessons. This will be done as a focus group discussion.
3. Sending an online questionnaire to staff and then interviewing some members of the teaching and support staff.

Ethical Issues

The following steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality and the privacy of any one who participates in this research.

1. A pseudonym will be used for the name of each participant in this research. In this way, participants will not be able to be identified.
2. All interviews and transcripts will be locked away in a safe place on the school premises and will be destroyed after the research.
3. The data will not be disclosed to third parties such as teachers or other school personnel. The data will be available to Dr Jane Medwell, my supervisor at the University of Warwick.

If you give permission for this research to be carried out at the school, formal consent will be sought from the parents of the pupils and the pupils. Parents and pupils will be fully informed about the research and will have the opportunity to ask questions about it. Pupils will also have the opportunity to withdraw at any time, if they wish to do so. I have attached a copy of the consent form.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this research, please contact me at XXXXXXXXX or email me at xxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Yours sincerely,

Keisha Reid

Appendix 6: Letter to staff

Keisha Reid
Birmingham

January 09, 2013

Dear Colleagues

My name is Keisha Reid and I am currently a part – time student in Educational Studies at the University of Warwick. I am carrying out research in English as an Additional Language (EAL) and my topic is:

“A case study of the experiences of small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils in a secondary school: Perceptions of teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.”

I am writing to ask you to complete a short questionnaire which is available through this link

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wie/courses/degrees/docs/kreid_questionnaire

I will also send a link to the questionnaire to you school email. Following the completion of the questionnaire, I will again contact you to request permission for a face-to-face semi-structured interview. The research questions are

1. What are teachers’ perceptions about the inclusion of newly arrived EAL pupils in mainstream lessons?

2. What are teachers' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?
3. What are teaching assistants' perceptions about small group interaction for EAL pupils?
4. What are EAL pupils' perceptions about small group interaction?

Ethical Issues

The following steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality and the privacy of any one who participates in this research.

1. A pseudonym will be used for the name of each participant in this research. In this way, participants will not be able to be identified.
2. All interviews and transcripts will be locked away in a safe place on the school premises and will be destroyed after the research.
3. The data will not be disclosed to third parties such as teachers or other school personnel. The data will be available to Dr Jane Medwell, my supervisor at the University of Warwick.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this research, please contact me at XXXXXXXX or email me at xxxxxxxxxx

Yours sincerely, Keisha Reid

Appendix 7: Codes used to classify questionnaire responses

Section A	
(1) Gender	Codes
Female	1
Male	2
(2) Years in role	
1-2 years	1
3-6 years	2
7-10 years	3
More than 10 years	4
Section B	
Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Section C	
Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Section D	
Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5



Appendix 8: Summary of findings

Participant	Data Source	Main Finding
Teachers	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of NAEP in mainstream lessons welcomed. • The lack of time to prepare and plan for NAEP a concern. • Group dynamics and behaviour another concern. • Academic progress of all pupils is a priority. • Small group work is not always ideal.
TAs	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the need to spend time with teachers to plan and prepare small group work. • Highlight the social benefits of small group work. • The use of small group work should depend on the objectives of the lesson and the needs of the pupils.
Pupils	Focus Group Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like small group because of peer-peer support. • Feel comfortable that they can use their home languages to clarify misunderstandings during small group work. • More confident in their use of English when it is with a smaller as opposed to a larger group. • Fear being excluded from group work because of limited proficiency in English.
Teachers	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload challenges when faced with newly-arrived pupils. • Level of proficiency in English a major concern when trying to match support. • Small group work provides interactional opportunities for NAEP. • Recognition of the need for staff training. • Need for training in social and communicative skills.
TAs	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group work can provide an environment conducive to language development. • Negative attitudes within groups can sometimes have an adverse effect on learning. • The decision to plan for small group work often influenced by pupils' Key Stage.

Appendix 9: Subjects taught by teacher respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Music	1	5.3	5.3	5.3
Design Tech, Art and ICT	1	5.3	5.3	10.5
English	2	10.5	10.5	21.1
English and Drama	1	5.3	5.3	26.3
English IT Business/Economics	1	5.3	5.3	31.6
French and Spanish	2	10.5	10.5	42.1
History	1	5.3	5.3	47.4
Humanities	1	5.3	5.3	52.6
ICT, Business, Citizenship	1	5.3	5.3	57.9
ICT, PE	1	5.3	5.3	63.2
Mathematics	1	5.3	5.3	68.4
MFL	1	5.3	5.3	73.7
MFL and RE	1	5.3	5.3	78.9
PE	1	5.3	5.3	84.2
Science	2	10.5	10.5	94.7
Science - Chemistry	1	5.3	5.3	100
Total	19	100	100	
Statistics				
Subjects				
N	Valid	19		
	Missing	0		

Appendix 10: Birmingham City Council, Ethnic Monitoring Form

ETHNIC MONITORING FORM Page 1

Pupil's Surname

Date of Birth

First Name

Male/Female

CONFIDENTIAL

Section 1: Ethnic Origin : Please tick one box which best describes your daughter/son's ethnic group

<p>White</p> <p>British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WENG English</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WSCO Scottish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WWEL Welsh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WWOB Other White British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WIRI Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WIRT Traveller of Irish Heritage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WGOR Cornish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WROM Gypsy/Roma</p> <p>Any other White Background</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WALB Albanian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WBOS Bosnian-Herzegovinian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WCRO Croatian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WGRK Greek</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WGRG Greek Cypriot</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WITA Italian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WKOS Kosovan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WPOR Portuguese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WSER Serbian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WTUK Turkish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WTUC Turkish Cypriot</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WEEU White Eastern European</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WWEU White Western European</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> WOTW White Other</p>	<p>Mixed Dual Background</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MWBC White & Black Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MWBA White & Black African</p> <p>White and Asian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MWAP White & Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MWAI White & Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MWAO White & any other Asian background</p> <p>Any Other Mixed Background</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MAOE Asian & any other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MASL Asian & Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MACH Asian & Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MBCH Black & any other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MBCH Black & Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MOOE Chinese & any other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MWOE White & any other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MWCH White & Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MOTM Mixed any other background</p>	<p>Asian or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AIND Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ASAN Bangladeshi</p> <p>Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AMPK Mirpur Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AOPK Other Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AKPA Kashmiri Pakistani</p> <p>Any Other Asian Background</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AAFR African Asian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AKAO Kashmiri Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ANEP Nepali</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ASLE Sri Lankan Sinhalese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ASLT Sri Lankan Tamil</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ASRO Sri Lankan Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AOTA Other Asian</p> <p>Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CHKC Hong Kong Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CMAL Malaysian Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CSNG Singaporean Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CTWN Taiwanese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> COCH Other Chinese</p>	<p>Black or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BORB Caribbean</p> <p>Black African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BANN Angolan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BCON Congolese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BGHA Ghanaian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BNGN Nigerian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BSLN Sierra Leonean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BSOM Somali</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BSUD Sudanese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BAOF Other Black African</p> <p>Any Other Black Background</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BBUR Black European</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BNAM Black North American</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BOTB Other Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> REFU do not want ethnic origin to be recorded</p>	<p>Any Other Ethnic Group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DAFG Afghan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DARA Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DEGY Egyptian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OFIL Filipino</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> IIRN Iranian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JIRJ Iraqi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> JUPN Japanese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OKOR Korean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OKRD Kurdish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OLAM Latin/South/ Central American</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OLEB Lebanese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OLIB Libyan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OMAL Malay</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OMRO Moroccan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OPOL Polynesian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHA Thai</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OVIE Vietnamese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OYEM Yemeni</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ODEG Any Other Ethnic Group</p>
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Research and Statistics
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March 2009

Page 1 of 2

ETHNIC MONITORING FORM Page 2

SECTION 2: Religious Affiliation

<input type="checkbox"/> BUJ	Buddhist
<input type="checkbox"/> CHR	Christian
<input type="checkbox"/> ROC	Christian - Roman Catholic
<input type="checkbox"/> HIN	Hindu
<input type="checkbox"/> JEW	Jewish

<input type="checkbox"/> MUS	Muslim
<input type="checkbox"/> NON	No Religion
<input type="checkbox"/> SIK	Sikh
<input type="checkbox"/> OTH	Any other (Please describe)

☐ REF Refused

SECTION 3: First Home Language

Please indicate the main language used in home or the community. Please note the list below is of most commonly spoken languages in Birmingham and is for guidance only. School can record almost every language on their system. If your language is not listed below, please tick the 'Any other' box and describe it in space provided.

<input type="checkbox"/> AFIK	Afrikaans
<input type="checkbox"/> ALB	Albanian/Shqip
<input type="checkbox"/> ARAB	Arabic (Iraq)
<input type="checkbox"/> ARAY	Arabic (Yemen)
<input type="checkbox"/> ARAA	Arabic (Any Other)
<input type="checkbox"/> BNGS	Bengali (Sylhet)
<input type="checkbox"/> BNGA	Bengali (Any Other)
<input type="checkbox"/> BOSB	Bosnian
<input type="checkbox"/> BSL	British Sign Language
<input type="checkbox"/> CCE	Caribb. Creole/Patois
<input type="checkbox"/> CHC	Chinese (Cantonese)
<input type="checkbox"/> CHK	Chinese (Hakka)
<input type="checkbox"/> CHM	Chinese (Mandarin)
<input type="checkbox"/> CHA	Chinese (Any Other)
<input type="checkbox"/> COG	Coastian
<input type="checkbox"/> CZE	Czech
<input type="checkbox"/> DAN	Danish
<input type="checkbox"/> DUT	Dutch/Flemish

<input type="checkbox"/> ENG	English
<input type="checkbox"/> FILP	Filipino
<input type="checkbox"/> FRN	French
<input type="checkbox"/> GER	German
<input type="checkbox"/> GRE	Greek
<input type="checkbox"/> GUJ	Gujarati
<input type="checkbox"/> HIN	Hindi
<input type="checkbox"/> HIK	Hindko
<input type="checkbox"/> HUN	Hungarian
<input type="checkbox"/> IGB	Igbo
<input type="checkbox"/> ITA	Italian
<input type="checkbox"/> KAS	Kashmiri
<input type="checkbox"/> KOR	Korean
<input type="checkbox"/> KUR	Kurdish
<input type="checkbox"/> LIT	Lithuanian
<input type="checkbox"/> MAL	Malay/Indonesian
<input type="checkbox"/> MAL	Malayalam
<input type="checkbox"/> NOR	Norwegian

<input type="checkbox"/> PAKI	Pakistani (Pakistani)
<input type="checkbox"/> PUNJ	Punjabi (Gurmukhi)
<input type="checkbox"/> PUNM	Punjabi (Miri)
<input type="checkbox"/> PUNP	Punjabi (Pothohari)
<input type="checkbox"/> PUNJ	Punjabi (Any Other)
<input type="checkbox"/> PAKI	Pakistani (Any Other)
<input type="checkbox"/> PASI	Pashto/Pakhto
<input type="checkbox"/> PERS	Parsi/Dari/Persian
<input type="checkbox"/> POL	Polish
<input type="checkbox"/> POR	Portuguese
<input type="checkbox"/> ROM	Romanian
<input type="checkbox"/> RUS	Russian
<input type="checkbox"/> SAM	Samoan
<input type="checkbox"/> SERB	Serbian
<input type="checkbox"/> SHO	Shona
<input type="checkbox"/> SLO	Slovak
<input type="checkbox"/> SOM	Somali
<input type="checkbox"/> SPA	Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> SWA	Swahili/Kiswahili

<input type="checkbox"/> SWE	Swedish
<input type="checkbox"/> TAG	Tagalog
<input type="checkbox"/> TAM	Tamil
<input type="checkbox"/> TEL	Telugu
<input type="checkbox"/> THA	Thai
<input type="checkbox"/> TGR	Tigrinya
<input type="checkbox"/> TUR	Turkish
<input type="checkbox"/> URD	Urdu
<input type="checkbox"/> VIE	Vietnamese
<input type="checkbox"/> CYM	Welsh/Cymraeg
<input type="checkbox"/> WOL	Wolof
<input type="checkbox"/> YOR	Yoruba
<input type="checkbox"/> ZUL	Zulu
<input type="checkbox"/> OTH	Any other (Please describe)

☐ REF Refused

This information is provided by:

Parent ☐
Pupil ☐

Date: _____

Data protection Act 1998: In order to administer your child's progress through the education system, the information that we have on your child may be given to DCSF, LA, other education and employment establishments and also to health and welfare practitioners with whom the child may become associated.

Appendix 11: Guide questions for focus group discussion

- 1) Do you enjoying doing group work in lessons?
- 2) What do you enjoy about group work?
- 3) Do you think that you get help from working in a group?
- 4) In what ways do you get help when working in a group?
- 5) Do you find it hard to participate in group work?
- 6) Explain why you find it hard or challenging?
- 7) Do you believe that participating in group work helps you to speak more English?

Interview Extract

Key: T1: Teacher 1 I: Interviewer

- I: Tell me about your experiences with EAL learners in your classroom.
- T1: Ok, there have been really *really diverse* experiences ah all the way from those pupils who have suddenly surprised me (' ') in their achievement in Science to those (' ') that have gone through the system, have gone through the years and have continued ah to struggle all the way to (' ') GCSE. There have also been positive in that believe it or not, I have been able to learn some kind of educational structures in different countries. You would tend to ask a pupil where they've come from and there are some places where you know that the pupils who come from those places are actually, are quite proficient in English and even though they are termed as EAL but they are proficient in English.
- I: For example
- T1: So for example, in many of the African countries, (-) in many of the Caribbean countries, pupils come but they are very good, they do understand everything that you are teaching them.
- I: What strategies do you generally use to help students who are not yet proficient in English, newly arrived and new to English?
- T1: Ah, a variety, I might use (-) more pictures, I might pair them up with another pupil (+) who might, a buddy in the classroom (-) Sometimes it might just, it depends really on the level of support that that pupil needs so sometimes it might be me just having a peek at what they are doing with the work, and maybe just re-directing their efforts if they are lost. But mostly, I would use pictures, I would use (-) also writing frames as well with pictures and if there is any support in the classroom, I would use them.
- I: Do you sometimes plan or organize group work?
- T1: In general. Yes, I do, sometimes I do. I found that with the (' ') GCSE pupils, sometimes I will not plan group work, depending on

the type of activity but a lot of the times I have to plan for group work.

I: Specific group work?

T1: Yeah, specific group work.

I: Do you think that it helps newly arrived EAL students? Why? Why not?

T1: Well really, it depends with the group dynamics. I mean in this school, I think contextually, (') it is a very challenging school and behaviours sometimes within those groups do not encourage other pupils to learn (') but then there are also that small pocket of pupils who I think are quite helpful when they are you know interacting with other EAL students within a group but generally I think smaller groups actually tend to work better than you know groups say of 4 or 5 for the, for our EAL pupils so I tend to pair them up instead of making them into a group.

I: Do you think that even when you do group work, do you think that that there are more opportunities for pupils to talk to each other?

T1: Yes, there are more opportunities, there are certainly more opportunities to talk to each other and to learn from each other. ('), it also depends on the level of understanding within the group as well. Some pupils might find it rather daunting to speak for the first time in a language which is, (') not for the first time but you know to speak in a language they are not familiar with so sometimes it might be a bit daunting but depending on the level of understanding ('), the ones that *really really struggle*, group work usually is not for them.

I: Because they would probable benefit more from being with the teacher?

T1: Yes, I think they would, probably, if, or a *buddy*, not just the teacher, but a buddy, not a group (-) of say 5 or 6 boisterous children. But just a buddy, somebody who they can work with a bit more closely (') and sometimes as well as the group conversations are taking place, you know, some of them are too fast for others to catch up with, to even catch up with so just having that buddy there who might speak in a pace that will allow the other person to understand might be helpful.

- I: Do you do anything in particular to ensure that a newly arrived student who is new to English has an opportunity to interact even when you plan group work, for example, what do you do, what do you put in place to ensure that they interact?
- T1: Well, sometimes if you're giving them clearly defined roles within groups, you are going to be the scribe, you are going to maybe, one is going to be the person who feedbacks. It might just involve someone actually just taking equipment for practical sessions from where it's located to the other side of the room. I tend to normally say, small simple tasks, the EAL pupils can do first and then they can, you know (+) as they increase their confidence work on bigger tasks and so on.
- I: What if you find that a particular pupil wants to, thinks that oh, that one is easy, that one looks easy what if that pupil wants to start at the bottom and work their way up, work their way down, sorry. What would you suggest to that pupil?
- T1: Usually I like for pupils to have a bit of autonomy over their own learning as well. You will see the moment they walk into class, sometimes they present themselves in such a way that you can see that, you know, you obviously don't want them to start from the bottom, the conversation you have with them at the door as they come in, ((laughs)) hello, how are you what's your name, you tend to sort of get a rough idea of how well they can do, how well they can speak the language, not how well they can do, how well they can understand what you're saying. It's not always like the perfect way (-) but in general.
- I: Now, in lessons, for example, and during group work, the interaction between students, whether monolingual or bilingual EAL students. Do you believe that the sort of interaction that goes on between students, do you think that it helps in any way the newly arrived students to develop their skills in English?
- T1: Sometimes I think so because just watching. Sometimes I believe some of our pupils actually pick up stuff by looking at behaviours that have been modelled and (' ') whether be it positive or negative but those (+) I'll give an example of one pupil that I taught some time back (' ') they came in (' ') as an EAL pupil ah but the group they were placed in was full of characters (' ') when I first saw them, I thought this child was, (' ') could get on to the language and understand it quite quickly, yes they did but what they picked up was

not so positive. So it's about modelling, the way in which behaviours and the language is modelled in the classroom that affects how they develop, I think.

I: How about lesson content?

T1: What about?

I: Same question, in group work, in Science lessons, the sort of interaction that takes place between students, do you think that sort of interaction helps them to improve or to learn the lesson content? (' '), we just spoke about English, how about?

T1: I think in Science yes, I think in Science yes

I: Or, how about the concepts,

T1: The concepts that I am teaching them, I mean like if it is practical work, this is how you set up a burette, you know, or this is how you set up, (+) say if you wanted to burn something, you've got your tripod stand, you've got your heat proof mat, the other pupil might talk them through how to set up that equipment. You know, if that kind of interaction is happening and that could be a skill that they could (' ') relate back to their written work and that is the content of the subject.

I: Thank you.

I: Do you think that group work is more of a challenge or an opportunity for newly arrived EAL learners? Is it? Do you think, for them it is more challenging for them to be in a group and expected to participate or is it more an opportunity?

T1: I think it is more of an opportunity, in that it's (' ') they begin to establish relationships which are crucial to their development. (' ') (+) I think sometimes yes, it poses challenges depending on the (+) what you call it, depending upon the level of understanding but I still think the opportunities outweigh the challenges. There are loads of opportunities there for them.

I: Is there anything you would like to tell or you have any questions, anything that I have not asked and that you would like to tell me, anything that you do?

- T1: What I have noticed as well, increasingly, within my classes is that the level of achievement does not translate to the level of EAL.
- I: Ok. Is there anything you would like to add?
- T1: Some pupils (' ') actually quite high achievers but then there is that language barrier. I would like to refer again to another one of my pupils who went and topped the results for this school because he came in as an EAL learner. He struggled at first but once he got the language, it was just taking off from there. That's just an example and I think also as a school, I think one of the things that we need to be very wary about is where we place our EAL pupils the moment they walk in the door because that could either make them or break them for the rest of (+) (' ') and I think that's quite important where those pupils are placed, what relationships they are going to establish i.e. number 1, *with the teacher*, number 2, *with their peers* within the classrooms. I think those relationships are very important because we also have other EAL learners who have come and even though intelligent have sort of had relationships with other pupils who sort of, have not had a positive influence if you like ((gesticulates with hands and laughs)) yes and also, I think it is a great help as well when you have support, *money* being one of the things that obviously affect, but you know that level of support where pupils come into the class, have that even if it's for two terms but that support is quite invaluable in shaping the direction, the future of that particular child.

Appendix 13: Adapted transcription system

(-)	Short pause
(+)	Long pause
(italics)	Words emphasized by speaker
(‘ ’)	Use of fillers by speaker
(())	Use of non-verbal features

Adapted from Richards, K. 2003, pp. 81-82.

Appendix 14: Information for pupils

Date

Dear pupil,

I am a part-time student at the University of Warwick. I am studying for a
Doctorate in Education and the topic of the research that I am carrying out is

“A case study of the experiences of small group work for newly arrived
EAL pupils in a secondary school: Perceptions of teachers, teaching
assistants and pupils.”

I would like to find out what you think about these questions.

- 1) Do you enjoy doing group work in lessons?
- 2) What do you enjoy about group work?
- 3) Do you think that you get help from working in a group?
- 4) In what ways do you get help when working in a group?
- 5) Do you find it hard to participate in group work?
- 6) Explain why you find it hard or challenging?
- 7) Do you believe that participating in group work helps you to
speak more English?

The main thing I will ask is for you to be part of a group where these
questions will be discussed. I will be guiding and recording this discussion
using a voice recorder. Only your voices will be recorded. There will be

other pupils from year 7, 8 and 9 in your group so you will not be on your own.

Privacy

When I write what you say about the research, I will not use your names so people will not be able to recognise you or your school mates. I will keep all the recordings safe and locked away. No one in school will listen to what you have said. The only other person who will listen to the recording or read the transcript will be my supervisor, Dr. Jane Medwell at the University of Warwick.

Consent

The Head Teacher has given me permission to do this research and some of your teachers and TAs will be interviewed. Your parents will also know about this research and will be asked to give their consent.

If, at any time you change your mind and do not wish to continue in the group discussion, please let me know. If you want to talk more about this research, please let me know.

Keisha Reid

Date

Pupil Consent Form

I, _____ have been told about this research and I agree to participate. I am aware that my parents have given their consent for me to participate in a focus group discussion. I know that my name will not be used and that the recordings and transcripts will be secure. I know that I can withdraw at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 15: Ethical approval form



Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees **(MA by research, MPhil/PhD, EdD)**

Name of student: Keisha N. Reid

MA	EdD	PhD
By research	✓	

Project title

A case study of the experiences of small group work for newly arrived EAL pupils in a secondary school: beliefs of teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.

Supervisor: Dr Jane Medwell

Methodology

This study will be qualitative and will have a case study design with questionnaires, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews used to collect data.

Participants

The participants will be school-aged Key Stage 3 pupils in a Secondary Comprehensive in Birmingham, teachers and teaching assistants.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

During the administration of the questionnaires, the interviews and focus group discussions, I will ensure that staff and pupils are treated with respect and it will be reiterated that participants can opt out at any point. Participants will be aware of the nature of the study and will know that they are not being forced to participate and that their names and confidential information will not be made public. This research will be conducted within my professional role as a teacher and I will respect my professional roles and responsibilities. I will be mindful of the BERA code of conduct (BERA, 2011, p. 6).

Privacy and confidentiality

All the data collected will be securely locked away during the course of the study. Once the research has been completed, paper versions of the online questionnaire and transcripts will be shredded by the researcher and recordings of interviews and focus groups deleted from the voice recorder. All participants will remain anonymous and untraceable in the thesis, papers or articles that might arise from the study.

Consent

- will prior informed consent be obtained?

- from participants? Yes from others? Yes

The head teacher will be informed about the research through a letter and his consent will be sought. Letters will be sent to teachers, teaching assistants and the parents of pupils. As parents are users of English as an additional language, telephone calls will be made to parents to ensure that they understand the letters and a translation of the letter will be made available in Somali.

Participants will be aware that this research is part of my continuing professional development as a teacher.

Competence

To ensure competence, the appropriate courses in Advanced Research Methods will be undertaken at the University of Warwick. A pilot study will be undertaken to ensure that the instruments are appropriate and throughout the research, I will be guided by my supervisor and will seek her assistance when necessary.

Protection of participants

The request to complete interviews, focus groups and questionnaires will be done in a non-threatening manner and at all times, participants will be aware that they have the choice to opt out of the research.

Child protection

Will a CRB check be needed? Yes. This has been obtained.

Misuse of research

The participants are aware of the data that will be collected, why it will be collected and how it will be used. The data will not be shared and will only be available to the researcher and her supervisor. In the thesis or any paper written after, participants' names and details will remain anonymous.

Support for research participants

If a participant becomes upset, I will immediately discontinue the interview or discussion and pupils and staff will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the research. As the pupils are minors, I will be especially vigilant and attentive to pupils' behaviour, stop the discussion if at any time, I feel that someone is uncomfortable and does not wish to continue.

Integrity

I will adhere to the guidelines for conducting and reporting a case study research and will also ensure that I follow BERA's guidelines (BERA, 2011). I will ensure

that the reporting is honest, fair and respectful by reporting only and exactly what the participants divulged. Any interpretation of data will be back up by transcripts and the raw data from the questionnaires. Data will not be manipulated and the reality of the case will be presented as found. This is the case study and it is my professional role and responsibility to remain truthful at all times.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

There are no plans at this time to publish this research other than as a completed thesis for the award of the doctorate. In the event that an article or paper will be published, both supervisor and researcher will be identified as authors.

Signed


Research student

Date June 8, 2011.

Supervisor



Date

June 2011.

Action

Please submit to the Research Office (Louisa Hopkins, room WE132)

Action taken



Approved



Approved with modification or conditions – see below



Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

Name

L. LINNAY

Date

22.6.11

Signature

